FROM DARDANELLES TO PALESTINE

A true story of five battle fronts of Turkey and her allies and a harem romance.

By

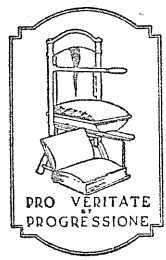
CAPTAIN SARKIS TOROSSIAN

Artillery Captain and observation officer in Turkish army; Commander, six thousand Arabian horsemen with Allies' army to Damascus; Chief de Platon, cavalry headquarters, Armenian Legion under French in Cilicia.

Introduction by

JOHN ARCHIBALD MacCALLUM

Illustrated with three maps and nineteen photographs by the author.



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To the Memory
of
My Martyred Parents

CERTIFICATE FROM OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
IMPERIAL OTTOMAN ARMY
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

ARTILLERY CAPTAIN—SARKIS BEY TOROSSIAN

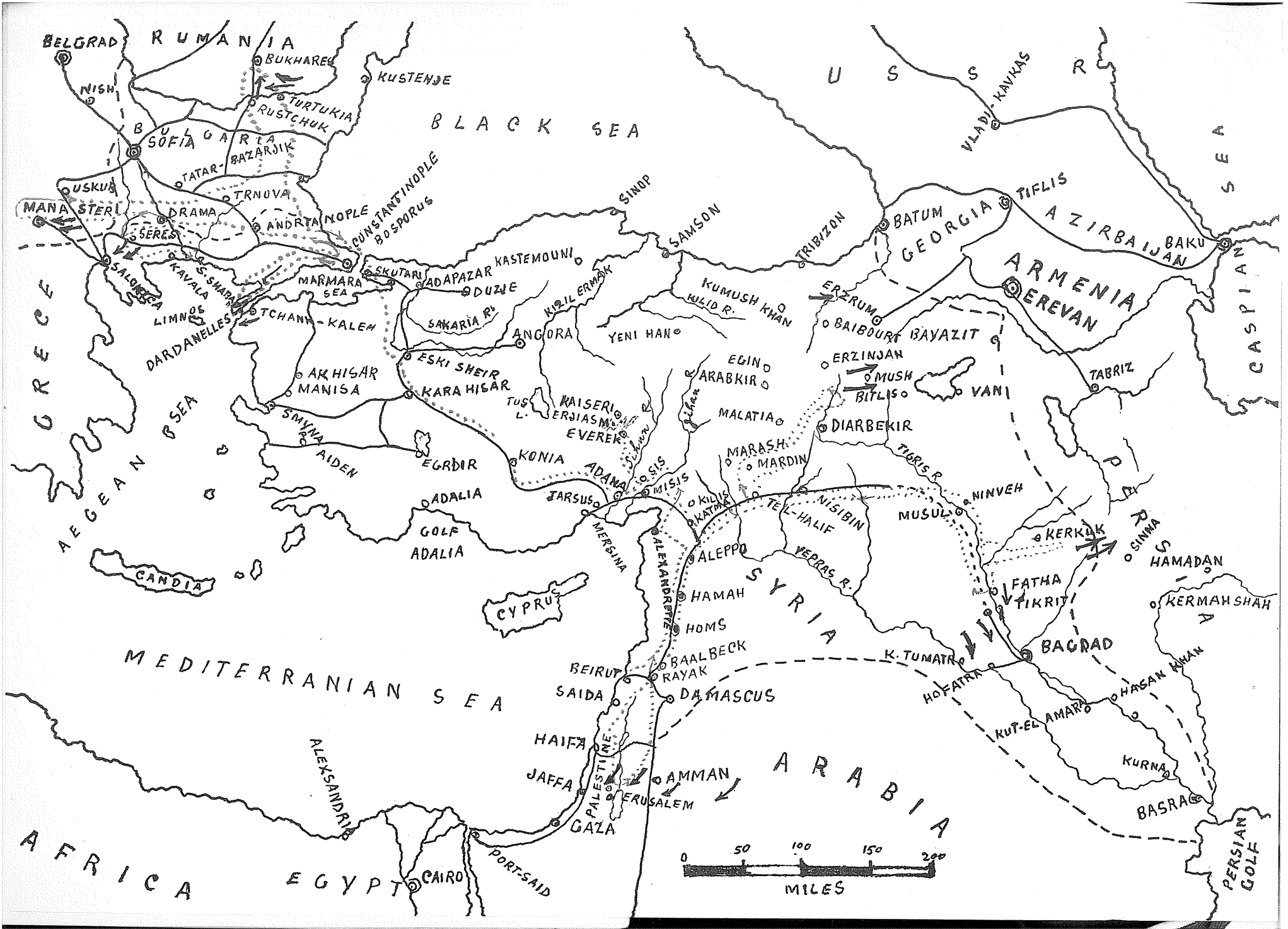
SON OF OHAN

PLACE OF BIRTH STATE OF CESAREA, COUNTY OF EVEREK

Captain Sarkis Bey Torossian was a commander of our sixth Regiment heavy Artillery Battery of Fort Ertogrul (Cap Hill Battery) during the War of the Dardanelles. During the attack of the enemy on the Straits on Feb. 19th and 25th, 1915, Captain Torossian bravely and valiantly faced the enemy Warships, sinking one and crippling another. Later on he was in charge of the command of Fort Roumeli Hamidieh. During the terrible attacks of the enemy Warships through the Straits on March 18th, 1915, he again fought the enemy with great sacrifice and sank another enemy Warship by which victory was won. The said person was wounded in action and showed great courage and brought victory to the Imperial Army. Therefore he is thanked in the name of the Army and promoted to the rank of Captain from Dec. 16th, 1914. He was also awarded with the War Medal of the Imperial Ottoman Government.

In witness whereof this Certificate was given to the said person. Dated May 18th, 1915.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
AND
WAR MINISTER—ENVER.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TURTUKIA
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MANASTERI
DRAMA
ANDRINOPLE
CONSTANTINOPLE
BOSPORUS
SERES
SALONICA
KAVALA
S. SHARA
MARMARA SEA
SKUTARI
ADAPAZAR
KASTEMOUNI
DUZDE
SINOP
SAMSON
TRIBIZON
BATUM
GEORGIA
TIFLIS
AZIRBAIJAN
BAKU
CASPIAN SEA
ARMENIA
EREVAN
KIZIL ERMAK
KUMUSH KHAN
KILID R.
ERZRUM
BAIBOURT
BAYAZIT
SAKARIA R.
ANGORA
YENI HAN
EGIN
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DARDANELLES
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ESKI SHEIR
ARABKIR
AK HISAR
MANISA
KARA HISAR
TUS L.
KAISERI
ERJIAS M.
EVEREK
MALATIA
DIARBEKIR
SMYRNA
AIDEN
EGRDIR
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ADANA
SIS
MISIS
MARASH
MARDIN
TIGRIS R.
NINVEH
JARSUS
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MERSINA
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ALEPPO
KERKUK
SINNA
HAMADAN
CANDIA
CYPRUS
HAMAH
FATHA
TIKRITI
KERMAHSHAH
HOMS
BAALBECK
RAYAK
BAGDAD
K. TUMATR
BEIRUT
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HOFAIRA
HASAN KHAN
KUT-EL AMARA
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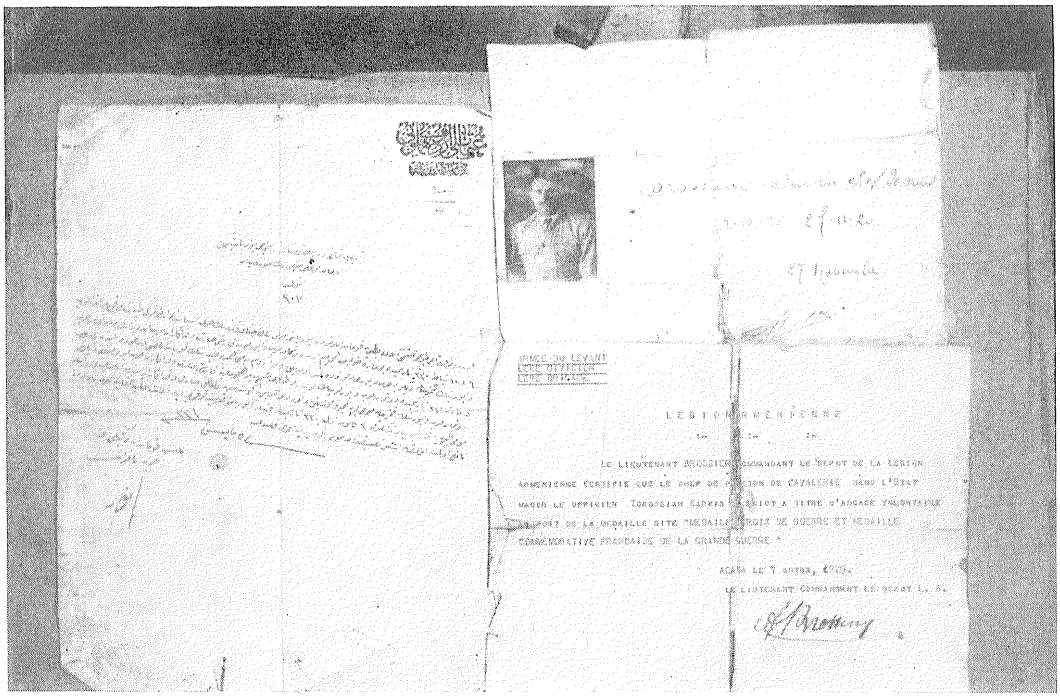


LEGION ARMÉNIENNE

Captain Torossian's certificates from the Ottoman and French governments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introductory	17
II.	Golden Day of Harems	24
III.	Sea Battles on Dardanelles	35
IV.	From Dardanelles to Slaughter House	60
V.	Dark Clouds Disperse—Rays of Love Beam	71
VI.	The Gallipoli Peninsula Battles Front	79
VII.	The Secret of the Harem	93
VIII.	The Sad Fate of My Parents	103
IX.	The Macedonian and Roumanian Front	115
X.	An Unexpected Meeting and Secret Conference	126
XI.	The Mesopotamian Front	132
XII.	I Meet My Sister in the Desert	146
XIII.	The Palestine Front	157
XIV.	In the Arabian Secret Service	172
XV.	On the Road to Bloody Revenge	188
XVI.	I Meet My Brothers, and Join the French Legion D'Orient	198
XVII.	Behind the Turkish Guerrillas' Lines	208

ILLUSTRATIONS

Captain Torossian ..... Frontispiece

Opp. Page

Captain Torossian's certificates of merit from the Ottoman and French governments 6

Captain Torossian's parents and sister as they appeared before the War 32

Captain Torossian in Constantinople June, 1915 40

Captain Torossian with a number of Turkish officers visiting him at camp near Constantinople 48

The mission, Captain Torossian at the camp, Bulgarian Headquarters on the Macedonian front near Kavala 56

Captain Torossian at the front of Manaster 64

Captain Torossian's camp on Rumanian front near Bucharest 72

Captain Torossian and comrades returning from mission to Sheik Mousa 88

Captain Torossian on Mesopotamian front getting first aid treatment for hand wound at field hospital 96

Captain Torossian meets his sister in the desert near Tel-Halif 104

Group of Armenian volunteers from America serving with the French under General Allenby. Notice the Star Spangled Banner held high in their midst. Two brothers of Captain Torossian are in the group 112

Commander Torossian when in charge of six thousand Arabian horsemen with Allied army to Damascus .. 120

Captain Torossian's Forces, (Arabs, Tribes and Bedouins) smash Turkish 7th and 8th Armies on Jordan River at Endamen Bridge 128

Captain Torossian with eight hundred volunteers enroute from Damascus to Beirut 136
Captain Torossian's brother, Sergeant Parsegh Torossian. He fought bravely in Palestine and the Cilician front. He was decorated by England and France 144
Corporal Aram Torossian, brother of Captain Torossian, who came as volunteer with his brother from the United States. He fought bravely in Palestine and the Cilician front. He was decorated by England and France 152
Captain Torossian with a group of United States Army officers 160
Captain Torossian, Chief de platon cavalry headquarters, Armenian Legion, under the French from Beirut to Cilicia 168
Captain Torossian with two group leaders behind Turkish Guerrilla lines 184

MAPS

Five battle fronts of Turkey ..... Opp. page 1
Allies naval operations, February 19, 25, and March 18, 1915, and the Allies land operation on the Gallipoli peninsula 80
Retreat of the Turkish armies from the Palestine front to Damascus, September 19 to 30, 1918 176

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Captain Torossian was born in 1891 of Armenian parents in the city of Everek, which is situated in the south central part of the Turkish Empire. His early compulsory education in the Armenian Native Parochial Schools gave him a considerable advantage in intellectual ability over his untutored Moslem neighbors, ninety-five percent of whom never received any kind of instruction and who as a class are little better than savages in their mode of living. He was imbued early in life with the desire to become a soldier, a career strictly forbidden their Christian subjects by Turkish laws, but while attending the State College in Adrianople he became fast friends with a young Arab named Muharrem, son of the Brigadier General of Constantinople. Accepted through this friendship into Muharrem's home and family as a son, Muharrem's father, a powerful Pasha, secured an appointment for both boys to the Military College. During many weekend visits to the Pasha's palace, Sarkis' romance with Muharrem's sister was kindled.

Graduated in 1914 with the rank of Second Lieutenant, Artillery, Torossian was sent to Germany for three months and shortly before Turkey declared war was appointed commander of Fort Ertogrul (Cape Helles), which guarded the entrance to the Dardanelles. From then on until the arrival of Allenby be-

fore Palestine, his experiences were of such a nature to cover him with praise from his superiors and win for him decorations from Turkey, Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria. But the years also brought sorrow in the death of his boyhood chum Muharrem, and his betrothed, and the massacre of his parents at the hands of the Turks.

Learning that his brothers, who had gone to America about the time he had entered State College, had now returned with thousands of Armenian volunteers to join the Allied cause, and filled with lifelong fear and hatred of the Turks and their duplicity in massacring his parents, he seized the opportunity of deserting his Turkish command and joining the Arabs under Nuri Yousuf, under the Allied forces. For his bravery and excellent leadership before Palestine and later as Chief de Platon, Cavalry Headquarters, Armenian Legion, under the French from Beirut to Cilicia, he was decorated by England and France.

Acting on five battle fronts combined with a thorough knowledge of conditions gained from actual experience has provided Captain Torossian with ample material for an intense diary—and we believe you will agree that he has handled well his material.

Captain Torossian is well known in and around Philadelphia, where he has lectured before numerous gatherings of Legionnaires, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The power and vividness of this book are explained by the fact that it is a transcript from experience. What men see and do and feel is always interesting to their fellows. There is a sense in which every man, however hum-drum his life, can tell a story of striking interest. If he will confine himself to what he really understands, others will listen to him. We become tiresome in our narratives only when they are second-hand. Then the note of authority is lacking. This is instinctively recognized by our hearers and readers. Here, Captain Torossian has worked under no such limitation. In this thrilling story of the War on its most picturesque front, he has described with clarity and movement, episodes and adventures that took place on a stage upon which he played a real and important part. Subsequent historians of the Great War, when they come to deal with the tragically abortive efforts of the Allies at the Dardanelles, and Allenby's historic conquest of Palestine, will find in this book a valuable source of information and the material which will give color to their story.

It is no exaggeration to say that the human interest is sustained and that from beginning to end, its level is high. True, there is a popular idea to the effect that the public has been "fed up" on war books. This idea, however, is contradicted by the success of *All Quiet on*

the Western Front, Journey's End, Spears Against Us, and a dozen others that might be mentioned. While the purpose of the writer is objective, without any thought of propaganda for peace, everyone who reads this book, and thus lives with him the hopes and fears, the dangers and struggles, the victories and defeats, through which he has passed, will lay down the story with the determination to do all in his power to see to it that a better way shall be found to settle our political, racial, and religious disputes, than by resort to arms. How strange it is that men do not see that they will have no valid claim to civilization until they are able to settle their differences through mutual agreements fairly and candidly reached.

While Captain Torossian is an Armenian, and many of the personalities who meet us on his pages belong to that historic race, his story rises above the local and temporary and makes a universal appeal. Incidentally, it gives a vivid picture of the great Lawrence, with whom Captain Torossian was briefly but intimately associated and to whom the captain gave substantial aid.

But to conclude, it is safe to say that anyone, whether he is a general reader looking for adventure by proxy, a student of the Great War, or of the Near East, with all its tragedies and achievements, will find in this book an unfailing fount of inspiration and information.

JOHN ARCHIBALD MACCALLUM

FROM DARDANELLES TO PALESTINE

From Dardanelles To Palestine

CHAPTER I

Days of World War I

A decade or more has passed since the East, a decade or more of peace for me and a struggle for existence in America. I have had many hours in which to ponder, and I have come to the conclusion that while the felicity of life may be in having just lived, in having thrilled to the impetuosity of joy, in having felt the poignancy of sorrow, in having loved, in having hated; the fullness of life is an understanding of social and economic forces, in the motives behind the acts of men and classes and nations.

Mentally, I suppose there is still much of the military man about me and my thought processes still betray my War College training. I am no litterateur.

The story I have to tell may seem to you to be one of adventure, in fact it is a transcript of a part of my life. Forgive me, if in telling what I have to say in the only manner I know, the pellucid loveliness of a day in my preoccupation with how a battle was won. I have seen the clear cold stars of the desert at night; and moonlight over the Bosphorus; in my memory are twilights when infinite beauty enveloped old Turkish gardens, and sunlit days when white puffs of clouds

hurried like swift messengers over the skies. I remember sunsets of mauve and old rose and gold and purple. I know of the East; of first love lost; of the beauty of a phrase—and the boredom of a pokey verbal gesture. But I know more of war and intrigue and of unfamiliar mountains seen before the sombre blackness of an approaching storm.

* * * *

May I digress for five very short chapters? I promise that I shall not again. It is my way of more quickly unburdening my mind of the years and coming to my story swiftly.

The world changes. But of the time of which I write, the world was ruled by the hovering shadows of men, rotund or narrow, tall or short, they were the little men whose greatest attributes were their indifference to men's lives and their willingness to sacrifice others before the forces of their own ambitions. They were the moribund messengers of a dying order. Perhaps their place in history will be among the macabre and the grotesque. They were symbols, symbols of destiny if you will, insensible alike to joy or remorse, viciously unfeeling of the heroisms and sacrifices of the millions whom they regarded as their puppets. They were as impersonal as destiny, but, now I am pleased to believe, not as inevitable. They were like brutish and ingenious gods, without humor and ruthless in their confoundings of the lives of the great unnumbered masses, the millions upon millions who suffered and toiled and in the end were the doers of all great undertakings.

There is irony in all of this, for the shadows I mean were the statesmen of the world. And the irony I mean is that those shadows, those statesmen, as individuals, were as inconsequential in the social order which they represented as the lives of the millions whom they despoiled were to them. They were but the instruments of the foreign money imperialists who ruled *all* the world in those days about which I write. They were the men whose foreign imperialistic machinations resulted in the massacre of my father and mother, in the massacre of hundreds of thousands, millions of my countrymen. They were the betrayers of the disinherited. And they were doomed to pass as once my people were doomed.

* * * *

I was a captain, a commander of a Turkish artillery battalion, during the World War, and later led six thousand Arab horsemen in the Arab rebellion at a time when Colonel Lawrence of Arabia still was lugging the bag of British gold far behind the lines. We called him in Arabic, "Havaja-el-Masra," the paymaster. In fact he was both paymaster and time clerk, placed there to see that our British Imperialist masters were getting a full day's work.

There was a time when I earnestly believed that the Turks were the murderers of my parents and my people, and their cruelty the cause of the death of my sister, but now I know that England and France were the real murderers, although it might have been any other of the foreign imperialistic nations. The Turks were but the instruments of Foreign Imperialism.

I say that it was England and France because I commanded the Turkish battery of Fort Ertogrul (Cape Helles) on the Gallipoli peninsula, and I saw our defenses, fort after fort, battered to pieces by the English and French battleships. And I saw the victors sail away from the victory never to return. The World War might have ended before it had begun had England wanted victory at the Dardanelles. But English and French imperialism did not want a victory, did not want Russian imperialism astride a prostrate Dardanelles, did not want Russia to challenge England's exploitation of her Indian colonial empire, nor to menace the French influence of the Mediterranean. And so my father and mother were murdered and countless men died in futilely heroic acts on a hundred fronts of war.

* * * *

Although I served in the Turkish army, I am an Armenian by birth, and I was one of the few Christians to become an officer in the Turkish Ottoman forces.

And there, in a short paragraph, I place myself racially and geographically and I believe, as adequately as possible. To describe in detail my old home seems so difficult. It was a world completely alien to America.

An oppressed racial minority in a nation of misgoverned, exploited, illiterate, muezzin ridden people, we Armenians always lived in an atmosphere of suspense and conspiracy. We were ruled by espionage and bloodshed, by unspeakable outrage, by massacres and atrocities. In short we were ruled as it seems to be the fate of all racial minorities to be ruled the world

over. In our desperate desire for autonomy we were made the dupes first of imperialist Russia, then of Imperialist England, and in the end by imperialist France. But the national names are of no importance. Foreign imperialism in purpose and practice changes only superficially; at heart it remains dishonest and altogether despicable. The foreign imperialists tormenting us to revolt and national aspirations were the upper millstone, the lower was the exploited Turkish masses who were incited to their excesses by their leaders, the demagogues who tried to keep their minds off their miserable lots by Armenian baiting and by the excitation of religious fervor and fanaticism. We were incited to impossibly fantastic nationalist aspirations until eventually the Turks, in desperation at the continued menace of our revolt, decided definitely to solve their Armenian problem by the great massacres of the World War.

As I recall my boyhood, it seems to me that there was something martial about the very atmosphere, the very buildings in which we lived, in which we worshipped, in which we went to school. It was like living in a beleagured city, in an armed camp, only there were no arms, since Christian subjects of Ottoman Turkey were permitted no weapon, not even a sabre. Always there was something electric in an air eternally charged with rumors, with ferocious restraint, with grim patience and with perpetual fear. Always we Armenians in Everek seemed to be waiting some sign, mysterious and prophetic, that would loosen a panorama of tumultous events; it was religious.

I went to school behind the great stone walls of an

Armenian church property. It was like going to school in a fortress. The walls were twenty feet high and enclosed the parochial schools, the church, and the priests' homes.

Our own homes were constructed with the same thought of offering the greatest possible protection to an unarmed and often persecuted people. They were of thick stone walls and contained from sixteen to twenty rooms, so that whole families, aunts, uncles, grandparents might live as closely together as possible; in our crowding together, in our solidarity, we had our only defense. There was only one entrance door to each house and it was enormous and built of great planks of solid wood. Under the houses were networks of subterranean passages and chambers where women and children were rushed to live without any of the ordinary decencies until the government decided to suppress the current pogrom which they had instigated. Armenian men fought with sticks and stones, their only weapons.

Another characteristic which I remember was that in city or village, if it were Armenian, the houses were crowded together with roofs closely adjoining. Solidarity again. It was our only defense. Even if a man were a farmer he lived in the village and went each morning to his farm on the outskirts.

I played in the shadows of grim walls and the shadows of fear, and I was adolescent when thirty-five thousand of my countrymen were massacred in the Turkish state of Cilicia. That was right after the rebellion of the Young Turks in 1908 and just when Turks and Armenians alike were joyous at the overthrow of the

Sultan Abdul Hamid. The result of that massacre was the final deposition of the Sultan. He was thrown into prison and there came to all of us the conviction that at last peace and liberty from persecution had come. My older brothers sailed for America, that then fabled land of plenty; our family means were modest and dollars from America would go a long way.

No longer was there to be a Turkish menace or an Armenian question.

CHAPTER II

Golden Days of Harems

Life in retrospect is always infinitely more important than were the days we remember. Trivial incidents, investitured with our dreams, assume with time the stature of very important events; and our past acts so often are somehow resolved and rationalized to fit into our present ideology. I have tried to avoid this pitfall. It does seem that we little Armenians in Everek played soldiers a little more earnestly and a trifle more wistfully, since for an Armenian to be a real soldier in the Turkish army and not just a conscript was practically impossible. But on the whole, except for the lessening shadows of fear which forever hovered over us, my early youth was uneventful.

It was not until I was five hundred miles or more from home and, by dint of great sacrifice on the part of my parents, a student in the Turkish State College at Adrianople that life really overtook me in earnest and my strange career began.

Long ago, when the poignancy of my sorrow was fresh upon me, there were times when, had you asked me to compress the record of my life into a sentence, I should have answered that life began for me with a friendship in Adrianople and ended in an olive grove at the foot of an old garden in Arabia.

Muharrem was an Arab, and his father, a Pasha Brigadier General of Constantinople.

Destiny! Chance!

Destiny is the end and chance the wind that blow men there. Both are inscrutable.

Call me lazy minded. Say that I have within me the mysticism of the East. Yet, had I not met Muharrem—who knows!

We met during our first days at college, casually as classmates. No special circumstance marked the beginning of our acquaintance, yet we became to each other dearer friends than brothers. By the season of our first summer vacation we were inseparable and through Muharrem's letters from home I came to know his family as intimately as my own. Apparently Muharrem's letters were full of our friendship for I was invited to spend my holidays at the Pasha's palace on the Bosphorus.

I wish that I might picture for you, as I felt it then, as I still feel it, the thrill of those glorious days; the dazzling splendor, the wonderment of the unaccustomed luxury in which I found myself.

In the palace, I was enveloped in the quiet magnificence and the gorgeous taste of the East; the precious mosaics; the rich fabrics; the priceless antique Persian rugs before which sometimes I would sit for minutes in delight of the various designs; marvelling at the craftsmanship; the silver brocades from the high windows; the hand tooled leather of the ottomans.

It was like a fairy tale. It was so delightfully true, but all a little unbelievable too, and I have no doubt but that Muharrem's gracious mother and sweetly sen-

sitive sisters, understood. The Pasha's home became the place of my happiness—and the beginning of that long troublous journey that found sorrow at last in that unforgetatble garden in Arabia.

Have you ever looked into clear, untroubled eyes, black and lustrous, in a delicate cameo face, and watched the lights and shadows whisper words that the lips need not utter? Jemileh's eyes were like that. She was Muharrem's younger sister and I fear more flirtatious than her sister Ferideh.

I wonder if ever again there will be moons as lovely as those which shone over the Bosphorus and through latticed windows when the air was heavy with the scent of the garden.

Our years at the State College at Adrianople passed like the swift rustle of pages; carefree, happy, joyous years, leading Muharrem to the Military Academy, but leading me I knew not where. A State clerkship? I wanted to be that almost impossible of all things for an Armenian Christian, an officer in the Turkish army.

I shall never forget the day when, just home from graduation, we were called to dine with the Pasha. He was sitting alone in the great reception hall, a dark imposing figure under the huge silver chandelier with its myriads of lighted candles. On a banquet table by a divan there were gold and silver dishes filled with fruits and nuts, a silken veil thrown over them.

It was Muharrem who first proposed to his father that I should accompany him to Military Academy.

I was appalled at Muharrem's temerity, yet so crest-fallen and desolate when the Pasha pointed out the

strictness of the Turkish law that I felt faint and pale. I do not exaggerate; I felt that badly.

The Pasha seemed as deeply sorrowful as I was, and he sat for a long time without talking, his intense black eyes meditative and looking far beyond us. After a while he smiled and said that we must not give up hope.

For the next few days I wandered restlessly over the palace, brooding anxiously in and out of the way corners.

A week passed and then Muharrem and I were apprized of a great banquet to be given by the Pasha in honor of the Prime Minister and to which were invited the inner circle of the military notables and all other state dignitaries who the Pasha thought might lend wings to his plans. We were not guests at the meal, but later were commanded to the room as the Pasha eloquently made his plea for their assistance in placing me, his second dearest son, he called me, by the side of Muharrem in military training, for the honor of his family. Muharrem and I were then introduced to each official in turn. I left the room dazed, my mind a confusion of gorgeous uniforms, genial smiles in swarthy and mustached faces and wine glasses raised in a toast to our health.

Two weeks, or was it longer? I wandered in the Palace gardens wondering about the future until I would see Jemileh by a latticed window or pass her in a garden walk and then my thoughts were only of my wish to steal a word with her.

This must seem terribly old-fashioned, but for a girl

of a Turkish family to speak with a boy, unless chaperoned, was unpardonably shameful.

Yet, for most youths, love of course found a way even in Ottoman Turkey—and despite eunuch guards. But Jemileh and I were not so fortunate. There was not only our difference of religion, but my great indebtedness to the Pasha.

Still I fell in love with two black eyes over a Turkish veil, eyes as luminous as stars upon a clear night. It was the kind of love that youth in America might find it hard to understand: devoted, ardent, faithful always, and no less intense that my lips never even touched her hands. Words were in our eyes and whole long messages of love were in a gesture or the flutter of a hand.

Then one day the Pasha returned and embraced Muharrem and me and I knew that at last my hope was realized.

I think the days which followed until our matriculation in the Artillery College in the fall must have been a delirium, a transport. I still seem to recall the pleasure of them, athough I can remember nothing clearly, except that I wrote to my parents and that they celebrated with a great banquet in Everek.

No one in the Artillery School studied more diligently than I did. No one tried more earnestly in fencing and gymnastics or horsemanship. I felt that I was honor bound to lead my class—and so I did.

Friday was the Turkish Sabbath and the day when we students donned our best uniforms and went for visits with friends and parents. The Pasha always sent a special landau for Muharrem and me. What a

bright world! What a glorious future! I do not know whether I was more proud of the Pasha or he was more proud of me. Life would go on like that forever. Military training, splendid uniforms, the landau on the Turkish Sabbath, and happy moments when respect for the Pasha, gratitude all were hidden under a moonbeam, if you will, or the deep shadow of a cypress as I stole a precious word with Jemileh whom I now adored. The future for us two, that would work out also. I smiled when I saw how pensively her eyes would search mine, for I knew that she wondered what life held for us. I was so sure. There were times when she would leave me after a whispered sentence, her eyes filled with tears. And still I smiled even through my sorrow for her, since I was born a lucky man and for me there could be no impregnable barriers, either of religion or custom. The Pasha was a great and kind man, Muharrem was more dear than a brother and I had a lucky star.

I did not cease believing that, even after graduation. Muharrem and I took highest honors and once again the Pasha gave a great banquet and rejoiced.

We were appointed Second Lieutenants, and after a brief post graduate course in military tactics, were sent to Germany for three months of intensive training. There was no time for thought of love, or future, or anything during those days when we were being polished off in our profession.

Upon our return to Turkey with barely a breathing space, we were assigned to duty: Muharrem as Aide-de-Camp of the division in which I acted as an instructor in an artillery regiment.

It was all so breathless and exciting and colorful and new, that the unusual haste in assigning us to duty was lost to us. A letter to Jemileh, which of course would first be opened by her mother, and that was all of love for me. I knew she understood the words I dared not write, as she knew I would understand the formal little notes written for her mother's eyes contained a thousand hushed and beloved thoughts. But there were no real barriers, for I was a lucky man and the Pasha was great and kind and of rare understanding.

A certain longing grew upon me: to return to Everek in my splendid uniform with my sword at my side and the sun dazzling from my polished boots. How proud my parents would be! I wanted to make them proud. I was their lucky son, now an officer in the Turkish army, just because they had sacrificed to send me to Adrianople. I became very sentimental about the trip which was to be a kind of triumphant pilgrimage.

I applied for a leave of absence but, to my amazement, in answer, I was informed that war was imminent and that I was to be ordered as a commander to Fort Ertogrul (Cape Helles) which guarded the entrance to the Dardanelles on the European side of the straits. Muharrem was appointed as secretary to General Jevad Pasha, Commander of the fortifications of the Dardanelles. At least we were to be together.

The Pasha was gravely concerned over our appointment to so dangerous a zone. And in our excitement we laughed, actually we laughed, forgetting the discipline, the grave courtesy, the rigid and custom bound filial respect that pervaded the Moslem household.

Perhaps there was something contagious in the thrill we felt, for the Pasha also smiled sadly.

War, and the rumors of war, the air of Constantinople was charged with frenzied rumor. Bands were playing everywhere; soldiers marching, bayonets flashing; smart German officers, great numbers of them suddenly, like an immigration; cavalry; clanking spurs; flag waving; cheering, shouting; and everybody felt safe, for to guard the waters of the Dardanelles there were the German battleships, the Goeben and the Breslau.

It was a lark. Sarajevo and the world events behind it or in the future, all were part of the lark. Who cared? We were military men eager for the opportunity to prove our mettle, officers eager to test the theories of military tactics. We were young and war had the sound of great adventure and the promise of decorations and honor. We never gave a thought to the battle's din, and the bloody, gory, sordid mess of it.

I wonder how in the madness of those days before we left for our posts, in the excitement and confusion of them, I wonder how I resisted taking Jemileh in my arms. She seemed such a child in her great anxiety over Muharrem and me. She could neither eat nor sleep and her face became deathly pale and her big eyes anxious and tear dimmed. I think that even then the Pasha's wife understood our secret devotion.

On the night before I left, I found upon my pillow roses which she had plucked from the garden that day; there was the fragrance of the twilight still upon them and the sweet perfume of her lovely fingers. She had tied them together with her handkerchief and on a tiny

card was written, "Jemileh to Torossian." She could have told me no more of her love for me had I held her in my arms and listened forever to the dear words she feared to speak.

Have you ever smiled and felt as though you were grimacing before something noble and infinitely bigger than yourself? Have you ever talked trippingly, glibly and felt as though you were mumbling reiterative phrases like a foolish parakeet? Muharrem and I tried to make conversation and laughter that last breakfast before the hour of our departing and that was how we felt. The Pasha's head, always so proudly held, was bowed. Muharrem's mother and Ferideh were softly weeping. Dear little Jemileh looked about helplessly but tried to smile when Muharrem joked and wagered that we would return within three weeks. No one touched a bit of food and the tension increased until I was sure that someone would scream. I felt futile and ridiculous.

The sound of the horses' hoofs on the gravel of the driveway came as a sudden release from an impossible predicament. Like Muharrem I felt terribly sorry for them but it did seem foolish to make such a fuss over what we were sure would be little more than an exciting lark.

We could hear the whinnying of the horses through the open windows. The Pasha arose and we knew that at last we were on the road to our adventure. Suddenly Muharrem's mother called him aside saying that she wished to give him a special message. The incident was so untypical of that perfectly mannered woman in a gracious but strictly formalized etiquette

Captain Torossian's parents and sister as they appeared before the War.

that I could hardly help but notice it, nor resist the temptation to be improperly curious and steal a glance in their direction. I could tell from her gesture and the movement of her head that she spoke of Jemileh and they were not so far away that I failed to see the sudden look of surprise on Muharrem's face. At that time in the haste and confusion of departure, I do not suppose that it made the conscious impression which I later felt that it did. It really was not until many months later that I remembered Muharrem and his mother as they stood there.

The Pasha came first to Muharrem and then to me and gravely kissed each of us on the forehead.

Then before anyone seemed to realize just how it had happened, we were in the landaus and on our way to the quay. The Pasha, Muharrem, and I rode in one landau and Muharrem's mother and sisters followed. Not far upon our way we saw the landau of Brigadier General Shukri Pasha, the former commander of the Army Corps of Monastir. I smiled at Muharrem because I knew that in it was the Pasha's daughter, Nourieh, and Muharrem's sweetheart. Nourieh was as daring as my little Jemileh was timid. I remembered how upon her invitation Muharrem and I had defied the edicts of the harem and spent three stolen hours with Nourieh and her friends while the Pasha and his lady attended a state reception and the great black Arab eunuch Harem Agasih (master of the harem) pretended not to see and the guards at the palace gates seemed to be looking for the moon. Fortunately, generals, Turkish generals at least, make a great deal of noise upon their return and the sound of

a bugle announced his return. A friendly servant had led us through a quiet hall, a secluded hallway, and from the palace grounds through a tiny and seemingly secret gate hidden by climbing roses.

But we were at the quay. Nourieh, impetuous and urgently in love, defied convention again and hastily lifting her ferehjeh (veil) kissed Muharrem full upon the lips. War, I felt, could not be so terrible, if a Turkish young lady might publicly kiss her sweetheart upon the lips under its auspices.

Jemileh stood by her mother's side. I kissed her hand and in her eyes I read messages that were meant for me alone; her soft, big black eyes in which the lights and shadows played.

The whistle blew, we clicked our heels, saluted and amidst the din of prayers to Allah we were off at last. The sea crept between us and seemed to push the land away, as we stood by the railing of the transport. I waved to Jemileh with the tiny handkerchief with which she had tied my roses. She waved a kiss and the land drew farther and farther away. I watched her until she was gone, vanished into the mystery of distance, a cameo with great dark eyes.

Neither Muharrem nor I was very talkative that day and as night closed in upon us we stood by the rail together and watched the turbulence of the sea. I remembered the joys I had had, and through the memory of them found at last the sadness that lurks in each good-bye.

CHAPTER III

Sea Battles on Dardanelles

They landed me, on a misty morning, on the extreme end of the Gallipoli Peninsula, a young subaltern, a second lieutenant, with the odor of the classroom still upon me. And there I was, Commander of Fort Ertogrul. Suddenly this business of war took on a serious aspect; it was no joke. There I was, with a fort on my hands and something to do about it. I suppose that when I took over command from the officer in charge I must have seemed the officious nuisance all second lieutenants are supposed to be, the world over. The fact of the matter is, however, that I was suddenly quite worried about my responsibility. I prepared for an immediate tour of inspection.

Several things I quickly noted:—

One:—Fort Ertogrul was prominently located and undoubtedly one of the most important guardians of the entrance to the Dardenelles.

Two:—It would be necessary for the enemy to direct his first attacks on this point before he could hope to make great headway.

Three:—Perhaps war was no lark after all.

Four:—The battery consisted of two 25.5 centimeter Krupp Cannons mounted on a circular track near the entrance and capable of being fired in any direction.

Five:—The shells weighed 650 kilograms each.

Six:—The barracks lay at a distance of approximately 125 meters in an almost direct line in back of the cannon.

Seven:—The garrison consisted of one hundred and fifteen men, all very busy either in repairing the fortifications or storing foodstuffs or ammunition. There was such a hustle and bustle about, such a look of preparedness that I expected to hear of the approach of the enemy fleet at any moment.

My inspection completed, I made a call of courtesy on the Commander of the larger fort Sed-ul Bahr which was barely more than a mile distant from Fort Ertogrul and I observed because of its size and the prominence of its location, more liable to destruction at distant range than my little fort with its two cannon battery.

At Fort Sed-ul Bahr, where five cannon of short range formed the main battery, I found the same air of expectancy, the same feeling of impending storm. It all seemed a little exaggerated to me. Since the morning of our departure from the Pasha's palace the whole world seemed needlessly on edge.

Upon returning to Fort Ertogrul I carefully examined the maps of the Dardanelles fortifications and found that across the strait on the Anatolian side were Fort Kum Kaleh and Fort Orkhanieh, respectively, of the same size, lines and battery strength as Fort Ertogrul and Fort Sed-ul-Bahr.

In addition to the four forts guarding the entrance to the Dardanelles were nine additional fortifications: five were located on the Asiatic flat shores and the remaining four on the European flat shores. Their total

battery strength was approximately thirty-five guns. Only four guns were capable of firing 14,000 metres; six 10,000 metres, and the balance 8,000 metres each. They were all the stationary type, set in cement, with angles of 45 degrees. I remembered my months in Germany and the modern batteries I had seen there and spent many thoughtful hours over the state of our fortifications. I reflected that normal target range of a naval gun was 20,000 metres and I rather think I wriggled my shoulders in my tunic.

For weeks we waited, prepared, eternally watchful, tense, expectant; and each morning we arose to the endless patrol of British torpedo boats, far at sea; and each day's end, before twilight crept upon the world and enshrouded it, in moving silhouette against the sky, we would see those British torpedo boats still in restless prowl. Three weeks without incident.

Early on the morning of November 3, 1914, two days before war was declared upon Turkey, I was aroused by a report from the observers that British and French warships were approaching and apparently making ready for attack.

I ordered the garrison to their posts, had the guns made ready and hastened to my observation post on the hill of Ashji Baba overlooking our fort. I reported to headquarters and awaited further instructions which came in the form of advice to keep my men under cover and everything quiet.

The British and French warships reached what I judged to be a distance of 12,000 metres and began a heavy bombardment of Fort Sed-ul-Bahr and Fort

Kum Kaleh. After half an hour of canonading, at 7 A. M. they withdrew.

I was on the point of leaving my observation post when there was a terrific explosition that made the ground tremble as in an earthquake. I rushed to the observation telephone and contacted headquarters. What had happened? No one knew then. But within a short time we learned that a shell from a British ship had fallen through an air vent in the ammunition store room of Fort Sed-ul-Bahr and that five hundred officers and men who had taken shelter there had been annihilated, literally blown to pieces. Col. Halil Bey was the only survivor and when I saw him he still was half crazed from his experience.

This war business was turning out to be a nasty bit, and I began to think more of my parents back in Everek, and Jemileh, and each day I became a little less sure of my ability to surmount all barriers, a little less sure that I was a lucky man.

For five more weeks, we waited, weeks of uncertainty, of eternal and monotonous expectancy. Sooner or later the issue must be raised and the British and French men of war appear before us, but when? And why the delay? And always the monotonous and unceasing patrol of the British torpedo boats.

On the afternoon of December 13th, while I was attending an officers' meeting at Fort Sed-ul-Bahr, another terrific explosion occurred. We all rushed for our observation posts but other than those ever present torpedo boats there was no sign of the enemy. We could faintly hear the call of men coming from the in-

terior of the straits which were not visible from our positions looking upon the sea.

But presently we were informed through the office of the commanding general that the Turkish warship *Mesoudieh* had been torpedoed by a submarine and it was sinking.

I left my observation post and rushed to a nearby vantage point and saw her just before she sank, bow first. I could see sailors rushing wildly to the life boats, others jumping overboard. It all seemed a little mad, a little incredible. It was like a picture of a marine disaster. It was unreal. Men dotted the water everywhere; a cutter foundered; life buoys bobbed about; men were swimming. When she sank there was a great gushing of steam.

We later learned that an enemy submarine had by great skill, and certainly by some good fortune, laced its way ten miles up the strait through I don't know how many mines. The *Mesondieh* had been struck so unexpectedly and in such a vital part that two hundred or more men of her complement lost their lives. In half an hour it all had been over.

I was beginning to learn of the might and cruel destructiveness of war.

A little more than two months of inactivity followed. The torpedo boats continued their vigilant prowling far out at sea and we waited and prepared and prepared and waited. I began to wonder whether if after all this war might not prove to be but several costly and unfortunate accidents: a stray shell and a submarine that made a lucky strike.

But on the morning of February 18, 1915, a new

sound greeted us: the hum of motors in the sky. Two large enemy planes, flying well beyond range of our antiquated anti-aircraft guns, dropped bundles of circulars over our position and turned toward sea. When I read these circulars I decided that most certainly I was participating in a most astonishing war, for they advised us that the combined French and English forces were about to make a major attack. Copies I forwarded to the Commanding General Jevad Pasha and so far as I know to this day this must be part of the official records. Our enemy was proving not only destructive but polite.

All fortifications were ordered to be in readiness and at this juncture Fort Orkhanieh, directly opposite my position, was taken over by a German Artillery Battery.

I spent the day reassuring myself of the condition of our fortification and the readiness of our guns and men. When I retired to my quarters that night I for the first time began to wonder at the Allied strategy. There had been no news of major naval battles and the German main fleet seemed safely bottled for the moment, so why the delay of the French and English Mediterranean fleets in attacking our position? Why the indifferent attack of November 3? Why, of all things, the chivalry of announcing an impending attack? Were they so contemptuous of our fortifications and of our ability that they wanted to afford us an opportunity to retire? Or was it, was it, I began vaguely to wonder, could it be that the English and French did not want to take the Dardanelles? But that seemed absurd.

Captain Torossian in Constantinople, June, 1915.

But the strategies of war were not the only thoughts to engage me as I sat there alone. What would the morrow bring? I was convinced that we were on the eve of a great battle and I do not think that I was so much on edge as dulled. This may seem a paradox, but I felt the weight of my youth. Barely out of military college I was in command of an important fort with a major battle impending. I felt very much alone and finally in despair I telephoned to Muharrem at General Headquarters about fifteen miles away. We held open an important wire for ten minutes or more, reassuring each other I suppose like two scared young ladies. I cannot say that I felt any more relieved when Muharrem told me that General Commander Jevad Pasha in discussing the fortifications had remarked that despite my youth he was placing great dependence on my ability and judgment in my command of Ertogrul. As for my ability, I questioned it, and as for my judgment, I was sure that had I any it must be wrong.

I found it difficult to sleep: too many thoughts and concerns and problems were milling about in my head. I began to wonder about more or less vague rumors which were becoming current in officer circles that there was considerable unrest in the Turkish interior and that the Armenian question again was assuming grave proportions. The Turkish rulers had their own serious problems and were, I was sure, searching for an effective means to solve their Armenian question definitely in the traditional and most expeditious way which occurred to them: organized governmental massacre. There was nothing definite but I remembered my youth and the history of my people.

My people! Six years since last I had seen them; no brothers at home; my aging father and mother and my sister who had been but a wisp of a child when I left. What would happen to them? What would the future hold for them if I were killed? And I had seen enough of war to realize that death really could be the end of adventure. So long as I remained alive I was sure that, as an officer in the Turkish army, I might be sure that they would be protected. In this first great crisis of my life I thought more of my own people than ever before. My sleep that night was troubled.

February 19th dawned a bitter cold day with a raw dense fog heavily lifting from the sea. I was awakened early and at six o'clock through my most powerful binoculars I was able to make out the smoke smudges in the sky and gradually the vague outlines of about 24 approaching warships. I maintained constant contact with headquarters, and watched to see what had been puffs of smoke above mere specks on the horizon assume larger and more formidable proportions. I had no idea of the knots they were making. I only knew that they were approaching swiftly.

Headquarters ordered me to hold fire until the enemy made the first onslaught, and I therefore ordered my men to the shelter of the bombproof dugouts until it was necessary to man the guns.

I had considerable respect for the size and range of the enemy shells and I began to worry whether we would have the opportunity to fire at all. I knew that my little fort could be demolished very quickly if they discovered our position and found our range.

At 7:30 A. M. the French battleships had taken a

position to the right of the strait while the English took their position to the left at a distance of 10,000 meters from the coast.

There followed a terrible straining silence, premonitory and threatening. I have spent happier moments. All this time the Russian cruiser *Askold* was apparently being used for observation purposes as it did not attempt to take an active part in the attack which followed.

At 8:00 A. M. the Germans in Fort Orkhanieh, apparently unable to stand the strain any longer, and contrary to general orders as I had received them, opened fire instead of waiting for the enemy to assume the offensive. Their range was disastrous, for the shells fell wide of their marks and sent huge grey seas of water into the air.

That one volley seemed to be the signal that pandemonium should reign, for the whole of the enemy fleet retaliated by mercilessly raining shells on the fort until it was like a huge bonfire on the coast; flames enveloped it; debris and wreckage hurled through the air and immense columns of smoke rose above it.

Suddenly, for miles, the whole coast burst forth in vicious, spitting bursts of flame as the enemy divided again and trained their guns on Forts Sed-ul-Bahr and Kum Kaleh. My position began to rock from the terrific canonading. Dense clouds of smoke blurred visibility for miles; it became practically impossible for my gunners to take any direct aim, so after ten shells had been fired at random I felt that we were futilely wasting ammunition and so informed Regimental

Headquarters. Colonel Halil Bey, in command, instructed me to act according to my best judgment.

At 10:30 A. M. I ordered my men to take shelter in the ammunition store rooms and resumed my position at my observation post and kept a careful check upon the further activities of the enemy.

The strait had become a bedlam, an inferno, a crazy picture in a mad world, a confusion of ships and gunfire and tons of boiling mud hurled high in the air by exploding shells; shells seemed to fly in every direction without reason, without sense. The very earth shook under the barrage and the thunderous din made my head ache to bursting.

Around 11 A. M. firing ceased, but for some intermittent shelling at isolated points. Through my binoculars I could see that Fort Orkhanieh was nothing but a charred ruin from which dense clouds of smoke still poured. Forts Sed-ul-Bahr and Kum Kaleh apparently had fared little better, with their guns practically silenced. Only a feeble retort from one of their batteries, still heroically manned, gave evidence that they too had not been completely destroyed. It had been a holocaust for the Turks.

At noon, hostilities ceased and we could hear the martial music of the bands of the fleet as they celebrated victory.

Shortly after one o'clock the enemy resumed operations, this time directing their fire at my Fort Ertogrul. I ordered my men to remain in their dugouts and kept to my observation post. We did not fire a shot. Enemy airplanes circled overhead. We gave no sign of activity. Not a man was in sight.

Apparently their observers had reported that Ertogrul too had been silenced, for the fleet began to steam boldly toward the entrance to the strait.

At 3 p. m., a sister ship had reached a point not exceeding 5,000 meters from my guns. For a few moments she seemed to hold her position as though for the purpose of directing the fire of other units upon our fortifications in more remote parts of the strait.

At 3:30 p. m., my men were at the guns, and I carefully had taken her position and given the range. At four, I gave the order to commence firing.

She had not a chance, for she was in a direct line of our fire. We battered her sides before her crew knew what was happening. She unsuccessfully tried to correct her position to avoid our direct hits but we poured such an incessant fire upon her that escape was impossible. She listed and foundered like a toy. Battleships came steaming in to her assistance and tried to tow her away. They had not dragged her more than 500 meters when she turned over and sank.

And then all hell broke loose. For one hour the combined fleet poured its shells upon *us*.

Our batteries were powerless and the men sought refuge wherever they could.

Darkness was falling when the enemy began to withdraw and I stood amidst the ruins of what once had been our barracks. I was overwhelmed by the frightful tragedy I had seen and had caused. I was weary of the weight of my youth. Life seemed full of burdens which were quite too heavy.

I made my way through the wreckage to the dugouts and to the officers and men in charge of the guns.

They were up to their waists in mud and debris, like worn haggard derelicts, scavengers upon a rubbish heap of the world.

I ordered roll call and to my amazement, though minor wounds were many, but not one life had been lost. We rejoiced together over a meal somehow prepared.

By eight o'clock I began to receive the congratulations of my superior officers. Muharrem called at the express wish of General Commander Jevad Pasha. It appeared that I had commanded the only battery which had succeeded in sinking an enemy ship. I was too weary to care although I did wonder if, after all, I was not a lucky man.

For three days, thick weather and choppy seas kept the enemy at a disadvantage and during the respite we rehabilitated our fortifications as best we could and managed to repair our guns. I was too busy to think.

On the morning of February 25, 1915, I again observed the enemy fleet steaming in. To the right of our position and beyond range of our guns I also noticed the same Russian battleship which came into view and took a position on the Gulf of Saros for observation.

The attack began shortly after ten o'clock and was directed at my fort. We returned the fire. In the beginning a few of our shells were effective. At 11 a. m. the English warship *Agamemnon* was disabled and forced to drift away from battle position. I observed later, however, that the damage had been of no very serious character, for she appeared again in the encounter of March 5.

The English superdreadnaught *Queen Elizabeth* was now brought into position and her guns kept up a constant fire until within two hours Fort Ertogrul was a mess of shambles, batteries destroyed and most of my men killed. My telephone and telegraph lines were down, equipment smashed and I was completely isolated.

When the bombardment finally ceased, I stumbled lated.

my way through the wreckage to see if any had escaped. Around 11:50 I finally found an old officer, Hilmy Bey, who, half crazed, was sitting amidst the wreckage of a gun and mumbling unintelligently. Eventually, I brought him around to the point where I learned that a few of my men had retreated toward the hills.

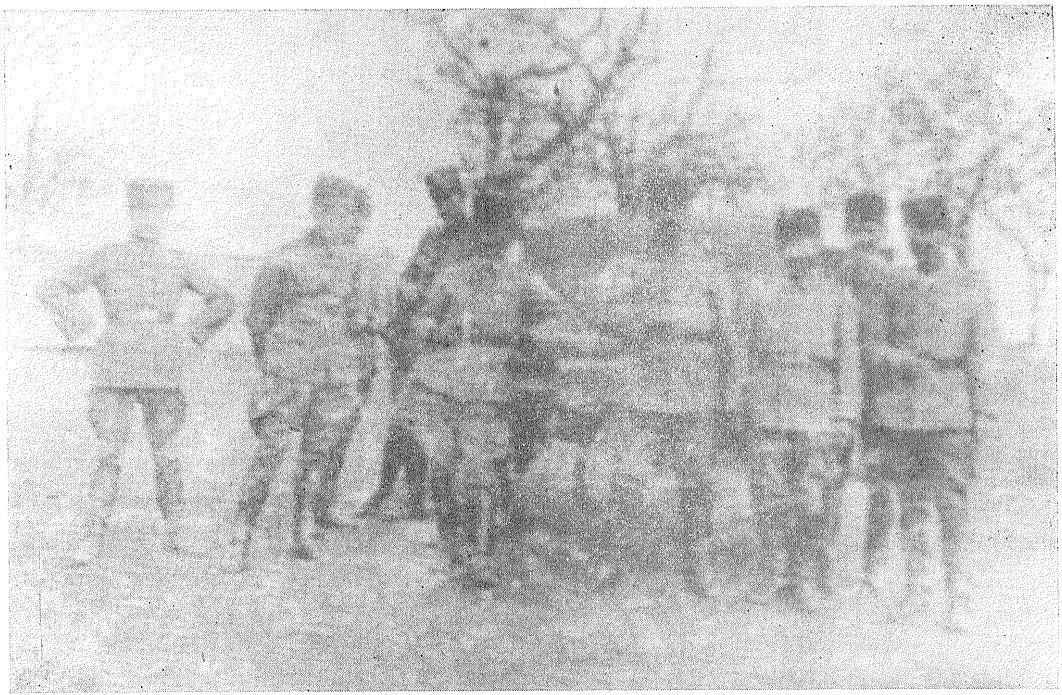
I decided to try to get in touch with Regimental Commander Halil Bey, who had been stationed about 1500 meters from my observation post. But when I found him, he was quite beyond being concerned with my report, for his body was crumpled awkwardly amidst the ruins of his desk and part of his skull had been carried away by a shell.

I moved by instinct and training. I was an officer and an officer was supposed to do certain things. After a few minutes or more I succeeded in untangling telephone wires and equipment and communicated the loss of my fort to General Commander Jevad Pasha. Orders were to find my retreating men, if possible, and send them to the general encampment. I was to return to my observation post at the fort and report further movements of the enemy.

It was well toward one o'clock when I returned to my post and dispatched an adjutant to go in search of the retreating men. My attention I turned to the advancing fleet. I could hear the bands playing. Death to the tune of martial music! I had dispatched my one remaining staff officer to the wreckage of Colonel Bey's post to report by telephone to General Headquarters, when an enemy plane must have discovered my position. At 1:45 the enemy again directed fire at the ruins of my fort, only this time, the range was my post. The shells seemed to rain about me and I rushed headlong for shelter, any shelter, I was young and I think I was scared, certainly I expected to be killed and did not relish the idea. Dodging desperately, I made for a line of trenches which we had dug toward the hills, these were filled with water from the rain of the night before and loose earth which the shells had tossed everywhere; they were not trenches, they were mud holes, but I found a half filled dugout and crouched there while the shells whistled and screamed and burst and I wondered dully what would happen next. It was not long before I learned. There was a terrific detonation, and a shell burst but a few yards away. Not a fragment touched me, but I was hurled from my position and literally buried to my shoulders in the loose slime and mud of the trench.

Twilight had come before I succeeded in extricating myself. I was numbed from pain and exhaustion and I never really knew just how I managed to return to my observation post and take a last appraisal of the enemy's position.

In all my life I had never felt so alone and so deso-



Captain Torossian with a number of Turkish officers visiting him at camp near Constantinople.

late as when I left my position and began trudging in the direction of the general encampment. I was barefooted, and I had not gone far before my feet were bruised and bleeding from stepping on jagged pieces of shells. As I rested for a moment looking back I could see the myriad lights of the apparently jubilant army and very faintly I could hear the music of the bands.

A drizzling mixture of snow and rain began to fall; I walked on, bedraggled and miserable. I seemed then, and still seem in memory, that I had walked for miles and miles and hours upon hours until I literally stumbled upon an old ammunition shed; as a matter of fact I suppose I had walked but a mile or more but even that is a long distance on a shell torn earth, in one's bare feet.

I heard a whinnying inside and found a not too seriously wounded horse, at least the animal seemed in a fair condition as I fumbled around him in the darkness. How I ever got him to his feet without being trampled under his hoofs I shall never know.

I managed to mount him and he plodded along, head down, a more listless, forlorn pair, I suppose, could hardly have been abroad that night. The sleetish snow and rain beat upon us, and we faced the storm.

I have no clear recollection as to what happened until I heard a rifle shot. That did bring me to, and to a sharp "Who goes there," I did manage to make my identity known.

I was escorted to the tent of the officer in charge and found myself amidst a small company of infantry camping there for the night. They gave me water and

food, and refreshed, and with the horse's wounds dressed in some fashion or other, I decided to push on because I learned that the general encampment was not so many meters away and that a small group of men from my fort had passed in that direction several hours previously.

It was well after daybreak when I came upon the encampment and found my surviving officers and men, eighteen in all and as war torn a lot as could be found; torn uniforms, still powder grimed, and most of them bandaged. I reported my arrival and my men to general headquarters and was relieved of active duty and hospitalized for a few days.

Upon my discharge by the medical officer I was immediately appointed commander of Fort Rum-eli Hamidieh and ordered to proceed there with all possible haste. I made the most hurried preparations, and set out upon my new command barely five days after the destruction of Fort Ertogrul.

Fort Rum-eli Hamidieh I found neither better nor worse than Fort Ertogrul, excepting that all its guns were short range. It began to appear to me that the defense of the Dardanelles resolved itself simply to making the best of a bad situation and hanging grimly on until we were inevitably shot out of our positions. Our batteries were able to cause no serious damage to the enemy ships and they steadily moved forward. When I arrived at Fort Rum-eli Hamidieh the enemy warships had advanced five miles through the Dardanelles and were stationed at both sides of the strait at Karanlik Liman and Eski Hisarlik. And they had al-

most cleared their path of mines about two miles up the straights within a few days.

On March 5-7 the enemy's fleet renewed its attack on our forts while at the same time an aerial attack was also begun. They were dropping leaflets telling us to have nothing to do with the Germans, that they would establish friendly relations with us.

On March 5th general observation post and British battleships stationed in the Gulf of Saros on the European side of the peninsula directed a fierce bombardment across the intervening land, aiming chiefly at Forts Chimenlik, Anadolu-Medjidieh, Kilid-ul-Bahr, Anadolu Hamidieh and my Fort Rum-eli Hamidieh. On a range approximately 20,000 meters.

On March 7th the Forts of Anatolu Hamidieh, Chimenlik, and Rum-eli Hamidieh under my command were partly destroyed and the ammunition mostly blown up.

After the enemy had given a respite of eleven days, on the morning of March 18th at 11:20 a. m. the Sea Monsters began another general attack with a fierce bombardment.

Nearly five miles from my position down the strait the French and English warships were maneuvering into new fighting positions.

It looked like a crisis and I began to wonder how long it would be before the end. The stronger forts at the entrance to the straits had been silenced long since; the enemy had made a notable advance through the narrow waters and with only a few small forts with short range guns intervening, the fall of Constantinople seemed but a matter of hours.

Very urgent orders had been issued to every officer in charge of the remaining forts to withstand the enemy to the utmost and hold him back by every means as long as possible. It did not require a general order to acquaint us with the fact that great anxiety prevailed in the minds of the Turkish leaders.

I took a position next to my battery and instructed that the heaviest guns should be made ready.

At 12:40 p. m. Fort Anatolu-Hamidieh, which boasted of the two remaining long range guns, opened fire on the enemy fleet. The ships kept darting back and forth in zigzag courses and no noticeable damage was done.

Tons upon tons of shells were fired that day; they seemed to pour like hail upon land and water.

By 2:30 p. m. Fort Anatolu-Hamidieh, the strongest of the remaining Turkish fortifications, was practically demolished, and Fort Chimenlik literally blown to bits. The city of Tchanak was burning.

By 3:00 p. m., enemy airplanes appeared and forced the Turkish army into a retreat.

The enemy, realizing that our main fortifications had been destroyed, began to maneuver more boldly and a French ship started to approach along the Asiatic side of the coast. I watched her every meter she moved. I became breathless with the tension I felt. She steamed nearer, nearer, then she began to slacken speed and swerve toward the center of the strait. I gave the command to fire and we scored three direct hits and placed an unceasing fire on her forward deck. One shot had taken away her steering gear. She began to list heavily. At 3:40, the firing was intensified.

At 4:45 a British ship hit a mine about 4500 meters down the coast on the opposite side of the strait and sank so quickly that no assistance could be rendered her by the torpedo boats that went to her aid. At 5:00 o'clock a British warship was surrounded in heavy smoke and drew herself along the coast.

The French ship tried to surrender but our guns were merciless and no attention was paid to her frantic signals. Finally she too disappeared in the waters of the Dardanelles.

At 6:00 p. m., we had been instructed to cease firing but the enemy seemed determined to settle scores finally and did not let up operations. Our few remaining forts were fast becoming masses of flaming ruins. All our more powerful long guns since had been silenced and only the ineffective and intermittent firing of a few of our field artillery could be heard.

At 6:16 p. m. orders were issued to stop all operations as it was obviously useless to continue. It was then that I noticed that the enemy ships were moving in a southerly direction as if withdrawing from their certain victory. I was puzzled and surprised. The sudden turn of events was so startling that I stood motionless at my observation post trying to fathom what I concluded must be a new tactic.

I left my post and decided to make an observation of my broken guns but I never reached them, for I had but gone about 125 meters when a stray shell burst and, as I later learned, fragments of it wounded me in the head and chest.

When I next opened my eyes, it was to find myself in a hospital in the City of Dardanelles. In addition

to my wounds, my head and face had been severely burned by powder. I was in bed for over a fortnight.

Muharrem came to see me daily and brought me a great many congratulatory messages, together with several leading dailies of the batteries which I had commanded and the only way in which I could have avoided hitting them would have been to muzzle my batteries and close my eyes. And thus heroes are made. I was pleased though, especially when letters came from Jemileh and from my mother. It was nice to know that love was waiting and that my parents despite rumors of Armenian massacres, were safe and happy.

My great moment came when Enver Pasha and his staff had occasion to visit the hospital and reading on my bulletin that my wounds had been obtained in what my commanding officers had been pleased to call heroic action, promoted me to captain. I now felt doubly reassured concerning my parents and was conceited enough to wonder when I might visit Jemileh and parade my new insignia. Perhaps again I was a lucky man.

During those days in bed I had a great deal of time to reflect upon the battles in which I had engaged. I was baffled by the news that the enemy had made no further advances after March 18th. I inquired of my friend Muharrem and various officials who visited me as to the general feeling that existed in the high command in official quarters. It was still the opinion that the enemy would return most any day and the war thus soon be over, just as it had been generally concluded that March 18th was the end of the Turkish government. It was no secret that on that date the Turkish

leaders had been prepared to flee and that special trains had been held in readiness to carry them to parts of safety in the interior.

When on March 19th the French and English failed to steam up the Dardanelles and claim the prize which awaited them, it is doubtful whether we of the army were more mystified than the Turkish leaders.

Turkish military and naval officials had every reason to believe that the high command of the Allied Fleet was fully aware of the very dire circumstances of the Turks. As a matter of fact the English and French espionage always had seemed notoriously well informed. All the elements for Allied victory were at hand; practically all Turkish guns silenced and her fortresses in ruins, a shortage of ammuntion; and in cosmopolitan Constantinople many disaffected factions which would have been only too glad to see the Turkish government fall.

In the lights of these facts and reviewing past events it became evident to me that the Allies were purposely holding off. But why? To any military trained man and observer the peculiar attitude on the part of the Allied forces must have been more or less suspicious.

Why had the Allies taken the precaution to warn us of the impending major attack by sending down circulars from a plane one day before the encounter of February 19th?

Why had a Russian battleship been stationed in the Gulf of Saros during the whole siege? Had she been invited there to observe at not too close a position the very valiant attempts of the British and French to force the straits?

Why were the published reports of the English losses, as given out in their official reports which came to us, so preposterous that we were more amused than amazed?

Up to March 19th only two English ships and one French ship had been sunk. Two others had been disabled but later returned to action. Their losses in men necessarily were comparatively slight.

It was not long before various reasons were being discussed as to why the Allies made no further attempt on the Dardanelles. Even the untutored mind of the peasant Turkish soldier was able to understand that the enemy had deliberately steamed away from its comparatively easily won victory. Here was a bit of diplomacy so brazenly performed that even the military mind could understand it.

Great England, Mistress of the Seas, Mighty France, victorious but slinking away from victory. Why?

Let us see what else was happening up to the day of March 18th. Well, for one thing the Russians had been victorious in the conquest of northern Turkey, and her armies had penetrated over 200 miles into Turkish territory. And waiting at the entrance to the Bosphorus were ships of the Russian navy and Russian transports impatiently watching for the signal to follow up the victory of the French and English fleet and land troops, Russian troops.

I have an idea that many a qualmy night was spent in the English and French chancelleries during those days as premiers and diplomats trembled at the thought of the possibility of the Russians seizing Constanti-

The mission, Captain Torossian at the camp, Bulgarian headquarters on Macedonian front near Kavala.

nople as their individual prize, then closing the gates to the Suez canal and England's Indiana and destroying the French and English domination of the Mediterranean. The vision of imperial Russia holding Constantinople was too much for the little men of the chancelleries, it became a nightmare and so an easy victory was somehow made over into a very shabby second hand defeat.

It is not my purpose to hold a brief for or against military men but of this I am certain, that wars, if there must be wars, could be more humanely conducted, (if a swift conclusion and the killing and maiming of a million, let us say, is more humane than the killing of two million), if military men were left to their profession and permitted to conduct a war according to good military practice and to their own judgment, instead of having to conduct it according to the dictates of demagogues and shoddy politicians.

Many times have I looked back and pondered over the tragic results which followed the English and French diplomacy that led to the abandonment of their victory of the Dardanelles. Foreign Imperialism and its lust for power seems a savage, vicious thing.

If the Allied fleet had steamed up the Dardanelles on March 18th, as they knew they could have taken Constantinople, I believe that the end of the war would have come years sooner, and untold suffering avoided; and there never would have occurred that calamity which in two years virtually wiped out the mature Armenian population of Turkey.

Bear with me, if I seem to have digressed, but I feel now, as I did then, that diplomacy and demagogues

hold too cheaply the lives of men who must win their martial victories.

By the fore part of April I was declared fit to resume duties and not a moment was lost in ordering me to command a battery near Fort Dardanos, four miles south of Fort Anadolu Hamidieh. I found that the Turks had had sufficient time during the cessation of hostilities partly to rebuild their fortifications, install new cannons, and store new supplies of ammunition at various points. Armies of men worked day and night in a frenzy of rehabilitation.

The conviction of defeat which had been in the minds of everyone had been turned by incessant propaganda into a feeling of victory. The Turkish soldiers went about their duties joking about the flight of the giaours, i.e., infidels, (the Turks call all non-Mohammedans "giaours") and the wariness of the Turk in being able to chase him from Turkish waters.

The enemy, however, did not entirely desert the region and it became apparent that preparations were being made for an offensive on land.

A group of torpedo boats patrolled the waters five miles straits, and from time to time an enemy submarine would find its way through the mine strewn straits to the Marmara Sea and sink Turkish supply and ammunition ships.

The war for the moment had settled down to a cat and mouse affair, with the English and French undoubtedly hoping that the Turkish mouse would gather strength to run in its hole again.

Fighting was desultory. Occasionally we would

hear the sound of bursting shells at points surrounding us, but no great damage was ever done.

Word came that the French were attempting to land forces on the Anatolian coast and the English on the European side but the news did not cause great alarm since several crack Turkish regiments had been sent to the Dardanelles to ward off such a contingency, during the latter part of March.

About the middle of April my lucky star shone again. A British submarine evidently came to the surface for the purpose of getting direction, and was sighted in front of my battery. We opened fire at once and continued it viciously until we saw her pitch forward and ram heavily into the side of the bank.

The British signalled surrender but for the moment I could not control my men and they continued firing. The commander apparently was instantly killed, the crew jumped overboard and began to swim the few feet to shore. A number of infantry men, seemingly gone blood mad, rushed to the shore with fixed bayonets bent upon destroying the survivors. I raced after them leaving my officers to control the more disciplined men. I had to draw my gun before I could cow them and prevent a massacre.

This was the first and last experience of mass insubordination which I had and the only time when there was any comment because I was a Christian. It required a long harangue and considerable strictness to finally make them understand that while war might be a form of legalized killing it did not carry with it the privilege to so overtly murder defenseless soldiers.

Chapter IV

From Dardanelles to Slaughter House

The weeks passed slowly; winter waned and spring came balmy and cool. The war at the Dardanelles continued at a stalemate.

More distressing news, however, began filtering through. The Turkish leaders, confident that the French and English feared to take the Dardanelles, were planning to permanently settle the Armenian question which had been vexing them. It was rumored that great massacres were to be perpetrated and that the Armenian population was to be annihilated or driven into a terrible slavery in the interior. All Armenian officers in the Turkish government had been forced from office and Armenian soldiers, it was reported, were to be disarmed and subjected to the same treatment as civilized Armenians.

Letters from my mother came now very irregularly and were so severely censored that my one source of reliable information was worthless.

I began to wonder what my own fate would be.

The Union Progressive Party, which was the party of the government, was desperate I know, despite the obvious respite accorded it by the diplomacy of the English and French. The treasury of the government was empty, the officers and personnel of the army had not been paid for some time, rations for the forces were running low, while clothing and equipment were

inadequate and in poor condition. As a measure of emergency, and to quiet the dissatisfaction of the Turkish masses, the Union Progressive Party of the government issued a decree that all Armenian churches were to be divested of gold and silver sacraments that they might be converted into money. All Armenians, who possessed stored food, were to have it confiscated for the use of the army.

The decree had only one defect. There were over two million Armenians who resented it and who would defy it if they could. The government understood that, even though the Armenians were unarmed, they were a potential threat by mere virtue of their numbers, so plans were made to deport whole cities, to separate families and to put them under impossible conditions, in unhealthy parts of the Empire, where from lack of food and other unfavorable conditions, they would soon succumb. Of course, there were countless other governmental plans to solve the Armenian question; I relate but one that filtered through.

I was not greatly surprised one spring morning when a message was received from the commander of fortifications requesting that I report to his office at once for further orders. I was relieved of command of my battery.

It was an hour by horse to headquarters and when I reached there and was ushered into the commander's office I was resigned to almost anything and quietly embittered. I resolved, however, not to show my feelings, to do what I could to save what promised to be for me, a nasty situation.

After the usual salute, I stood waiting. The comman-

der seemed preoccupied and I thought, embarrassed, as he fumbled about papers which were lying on his desk. He arose and with several official looking documents in his hand came to me around his desk. I wondered if I would be obliged to give up my sword then and there. When he addressed me as dear comrade, and clasped my hand in a friendly grasp I was more at a loss than ever. My relations with my fellow officers and my military superiors in the Turkish army had always been most cordial but in the stress of trying times I felt that the attitude of the civilian rulers might have been transmitted to the military as well. And it may have been, yet, I never found it so.

He asked me to sit down and remarked that I undoubtedly had heard of the new policy of the Ottoman government toward Christian soldiers. The letters of the Secred which he held in his hand, he told me, were from the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, and instructed my presence before him at once.

I then learned that the first order had been received several days before, but that the commander had used his best influence to keep me with his forces. He had sent urgent protests that I was one of his best men and could not easily be spared. His appeals had been in vain and I was to make myself ready to board a Turkish torpedo boat that night and report before the Minister of War the following morning.

I sat unmoved. I did not know what to say. So this was to be the end of the road of adventure; the reward of loyalty, of sound professional services. I found it as difficult to speak as did my commander who stood by the window looking gloomily out. I think that

we each forced a smile as we shook hands when I left. He knew how grateful I was for his consideration, despite my inadequate mumblings.

The remainder of the day I spent in packing. Toward evening, I visited Muharrem at general headquarters and found him more overwrought and incensed than I appeared to be myself. And in the same breath of his indignation he admonished me in the name of Allah and our friendship not to do or say one injudicious thing. He railed against the stupidity of the government and its cruelty and then cautioned me how to act calmly and forcefully before Enver Pasha, how to impress him with my loyalty to the Turkish cause.

Not until my ship was about to leave, as a matter of fact, it was at the foot of the gangplank that he told me that General Commander Jevad Pasha had also interested himself in my case and had written several letters to the Minister of War, extolling my loyalty, efficiency, and bravery, pointing out also that forts under my command had been the only ones successful in sinking enemy ships. A lucky star, I thought, is a good thing to have, even if it is not around all the time; Jevad Pasha's letter might have some weight.

We streamed continually along the strait with all lights extinguished and with every act and word muffled. I paced the deck for many hours and my thoughts were as dark as the night. I went to uneasy sleep, resolved that for every ignominy placed upon my parents, or upon me, or my people, I would repay the Turk twofold. Years after I reflected upon the interesting fact that a great moral indignation at wrong done to others does not expressively develop until one

suffers oneself; people are not so much indignant as to the injustices done to others as they are outraged at what happens to themselves.

I awakened well after daylight and the month was May, and the sun bright, and the sky clear blue; it was not a morning for unpleasant tasks.

Shortly after seven o'clock, the destroyer docked and I was on the quay hailing a landau. The War Ministry building was in Stamboul and a mile or more from shore. As we drew near to it I began reflecting upon the number of officers who during the reign of the Sultans had been summoned there never to return again and of the many Christians who had been cast into the prisons beneath it to await sure death. I was unhappy and uncomfortable.

The landau left me at the gates, a guard approached and after examining my credentials, permitted me to pass, directing me to the Minister of War's offices which were in the right wing of the building.

I first was escorted to the office of the local Military Commander who was a powerful built Turk, tall and dominating, with dark, piercing, cold eyes; not a military man but a bureaucrat in uniform. I saluted and stood at strict attention.

He looked directly through me for a moment, and I was sure that I was made of papier mache. Suddenly he grasped his revolver, and I shall never forget that moment, for I presumed that he was going to kill me there and then. I wondered why he should want to make such a mess of his office. The thought was absurd of course, still in moments of stress a great many absurd thoughts can creep in unawares.

Captain Torossian at the front of Manaster.

He literally shouted his demand that I tell him who I was and why I was there, with sword and side arms. I told him that I was Captain Torossian from the front by summons of His Excellency the Minister of War.

He paid no attention whatever to my remarks, but I saw him press a button and heard a gong clamor outside. A sergeant and two sentries came running in, double quick time, and pinned my arms to my side and divested me of sword and revolver. Despite my protest, which went unanswered, they led me down the hall, unbolted a door and simply shoved me in what proved to be an overcrowded detention hall. The stench of the fetid air was terrible; there was practically no ventilation. Hundreds of half starved, half clothed, unwashed Turkish riff-raff were in the hall and were singing. They crowded about me and welcomed me familiarly as Captain and demanded to know if I were appointed their commander.

Finally I learned that the men were long term prisoners who had been granted pardon by his Excellency Talaat Pasha, Minister of Interior, on condition that they do duty in the interior, in the instigation and carrying out of Armenian powers. They loudly clamored for the blood of the giaours and the embraces of their women. They improvised all manner of filthy doggerel.

I was still talking with them, trying to learn their destination, when the door opened again and an excited officer, accompanied by a sergeant and several sentries, came bursting in. The officer began apologizing before I could understand his words and begged me to follow him to the hall. My revolver and sword were

returned to me and finally I learned that the Minister of War, who had been expecting me, had made inquiry of the Local Commander as to my whereabouts.

After all, I decided, it was spring and I did have a lucky star. Many times, since that incident, I have wondered what the Local Commander might have had in store for me.

I was escorted to a reception room, where rich tapestries and lovely rugs and a luxury of divans and ottomans were mellow in the May sunlight that filtered through the high windows. I began to have confidence again.

There was the grating sound of a door opening and the voice of an officer called Captain Torossian. I arose, nervously adjusted my uniform and followed him down a long, narrow corridor, lined with military police and intelligence officers all armed and nervously alert.

After formal salutes the secretary took my guard, glanced at the name, and at once became smiling and cordial. He reached in his desk for a file of papers and looked over them hastily, still smiling. Then he arose and extended his hand and said "Welcome hero!"

I knew that it was spring.

He bade me be seated and then told me that the Imperial Turkish government was deeply grateful for what he called my noble service and that the army regarded my conduct on the Dardanelles as no less than valorous.

That was good news.

Then he went on to explain that the high command had deemed it expedient to recall all Christian soldiers

from the Turkish ranks to place them in laboring positions behind the lines. He added, however, that the ruling did not apply in my case, and that I was at liberty to return to my command in the Dardanelles, or accept another appointment in the Field Artillery Detachment. I was to give my decision before I left.

He picked up the correspondence which he had taken from his desk and beckoned me to follow. I was escorted into the private office of Enver Pasha who sat in a majestic overstuffed leather chair behind an enormous desk and I felt instinctively that he surveyed me from his sly, narrow eyes with an uncertain look.

Formal salutes again. Not a word spoken. The secretary placed the papers on the War Minister's desk and quietly withdrew.

After staring at me for fully a minute, his Excellency arose and introduced me as the Armenian hero of the Dardanelles to his German advisers Marshall Lehman von Sanders and General Vondergoltz.

A hero again. I was beginning to believe it.

My reception was so cordial that I felt at ease at once.

The conversation which I shall set down, naturally is not the exact words used, but is the accurate gist of them, and record my first real effort at dissimulation.

"From the official reports, Captain," the War Minister said, "it seems as though you have studied military tactics pretty thoroughly. Tell me what is your opinion of the fortifications of the Dardanelles. Are they effective enough to ward off the attack of enemy warships?"

Naturally I did not feel it judicious to tell him that

I thought the fortifications were about as effective as the worthless mounds of rubbish they were, so I became evasive and generalized.

"Emirinis der Nazer Pasha Haziretlery, (the minister order of Your Excellency) I have but one suggestion: Place small cannons along the shore in such a manner as to prevent enemy mine sweepers from picking up our mines."

His next question was abrupt. "Can the British succeed in capturing Constantinople by landing forces on the Dardanelles and making advances by land?"

"No, sir," I answered with a great deal more assurance than I felt. "It is necessary only to place real patriotic troops before them and their movements will be effectively checked. The troops already there are of our finest type and ought to be able to repulse enemy attacks. In my opinion, your Excellency, war is not a matter of science and learning alone, nor does its success depend upon merely money, men, and expert equipment. War is an affair of the heart also and victories are won through sheer patriotism."

It was a statement which I would have been ashamed to make to my staff sergeant, but it seemed to please his Excellency behind his desk, for he smiled broadly and glanced in the direction of his colleagues, who, I am sure, personally must have questioned the military sense of my argument.

The War minister next pointed to a large map directly in front of his desk and asked, "Captain, in your opinion, what caused the failure of the German army to capture Paris?"

I began to feel like a prize pupil brought to show

off, but I did have a ready answer for that question too.

"Your Excellency," I replied, "in my estimation the Germans made a great mistake in halting after having broken the Allies' first line of defense. They should not have waited for reinforcements, but should have marched straight on to their goal. Had they done this, Paris would have been in their hands before the demoralized French Army had had an opportunity to reform and unite again."

Hardly had I finished, when the War Minister began chuckling. The German officers spoke rapidly to each other in their own tongue, and for all I know, may have been remarking on the fact that young officers remain the same the world over. I have no doubt that many a second lieutenant could have told the general staff just what to do. However, that was my honest opinion then and continues so.

Cigars were passed around and I waited in silence. The Pasha glanced again at the papers before him.

"Captain," his next query was, "do you think that an officer is qualified to assume command of an artillery battery immediately upon graduation from the Military College?"

"No Sir," was my instant reply. "Most of my classmates did well at school, but in active service, they displayed considerable nervousness and were not able to handle their duties as intelligently as they could or should. Critical situations, Sir, are not for the inexperienced."

He made no comments but jotted down a few notes. Then, as if to terminate the interview, he pushed my

papers lightly aside and swung around in his chair to directly face me.

"Have you ever seen me in the Dardanelles?" he asked jokingly.

"Yes, indeed, your Excellency. You and your staff were kind enough to visit the officer's wing of a hospital in the city of Dardanelles at a time when I lay there wounded. On that occasion, if you recall, your Excellency, you promoted me from Second Lieutenant to Captain."

The interview concluded by his questioning me as to whether I desired to return to my old command or assume a new one as commander of the field artillery Regiment of the Eighth Division.

I chose the latter.

Salutes again and a courteous farewell from the German officers, and the Pasha himself saw me to the door.

In the secretary's office I received a permit for a three weeks leave of absence and an escort to the gate. If ever a man walked on air, I did that morning.

CHAPTER V

Dark Clouds Disperse—Rays of Love Beam

The first thing I did after hailing a landau was to hasten to the nearest telegraph office and send messages to Muharrem, my mother, and General Jevad Pasha.

Many stories were current now concerning conditions in the Armenian States and in the interior. There were tales that all males, above fifteen, were being murdered before the eyes of their women; of wives and daughters ravished; of women and children driven, over weary miles, into exile.

I registered at one of the larger hotels and spent two anxious days awaiting word from my home. At last it came: my parents and sister had not been molested because their son was Captain Torossian at the Dardanelles. There seemed to be sense in this hero stuff after all.

Spring was in the air, and on the morrow, Muharrem's parents were returning to the Pasha's Palace after a week's absence from town.

I decided to drive down to Taxim at Pera and visit one of the military clubs, located in that district, and spend the evening there. I decided upon the Casino, the most popular of the clubs, conducted by an Armenian, named Garabed, a man of favor and reputation among Turkish officers for his service and courtesy and generosity.

That night was mine, and it would be false modesty for me to deny that it gave me great pleasure, then as it does to this day.

Hardly had I crossed the threshold when several officers recognized me and set up a cheer for the hero of Hamidieh. Lucky or not, by this time it was nice being a hero. I was lifted from the floor and carried on the shoulders of two officers who led a parade around the sofa. The civilian patrons, mostly wealthy merchants, jumped to their feet and cheered. Some shouted that there should be a feast. It was a night for a king. I was the king and liked it. The proprietor, Garabed, served my table personally, pushing aside his matre de hotel and his assistants. Wines and liquors; song. I was thrilled and glad to be alive. The orchestra played and half clad dancing girls swayed sensuously to eastern music.

There was no shell strewn Dardanelles, no Armenian question, no war with death and gruesomeness. It was spring and the next day I was to see Jemileh. How lucky a man I was!

Midnight and the war enforced curfew hours came too soon. The patrons were leaving when Garabed approached me and invited me to spend the night at his home.

I went to bed still amused and pleased at Garabed's boasting to his wife of my Armenian origin and the honor conferred upon me by the Turks.

The next morning, I awakened to a day of azure skies and shimmering sunshine. The flower scented air from the garden seemed strange after so many dawns that reeked of burned powder.

Captain Torossian's camp on the Rumanian front near Bucharest.

At breakfast, I suddenly decided to confide in Garabed's wife and so I told her of my secret love for Jemileh. She must have understood how urgently I wanted to see my sweetheart for, despite the danger involved in the shelter of a moslem girl and a Christian man under her roof, she suggested that I arrange a meeting with Jemileh in her home.

It occurred to me later that I must have been terribly rude; I bolted my breakfast and literally scrambled out of the house for a landau, calling a hasty adieu.

On my way to the Pasha's Palace, imprudently I suppose, I wrote a note to Jemileh, disclosing my plans and asking her to meet me at Garabed's home at one o'clock the following day. She must find a way I urged.

Then I began to worry how I should be able to find an unseen moment during which to give her a note.

When the palace doors opened to receive me, Muharren's mother was waiting and kissed me and pressed me to her heart as though I were her son. The Pasha warmly pressed my hand and we ascended the marble staircase together, chatting and laughing.

The morning hours passed in converse with the Pasha. He plied me with every imaginable question concerning the front and made me relate experience after experience. I noticed that he seemed to have aged greatly since I had left.

My eyes must constantly have roved to the doorway, for I was forever hoping that Muharrem's mother and sisters would appear. Finally conversation languished

and I expressed a wish to go into the garden and once again wander along the old familiar paths.

Down through the portico I casually strolled. The Pasha's garden was a fairyland in the spring. The tall trees which lined the walk were of young bud, and spring flowers bloomed against the new emerald of the grass. Vines which corded the arbored walks had thrown young tendrils to the sun. At a safe distance, I paused and glanced back to see if Jemileh from the harem window might have seen me in the garden as I had planned she should, and somehow have managed to slip away. I saw her, I saw her like a fairy walking in that sweet scented fairyland of spring; she came down the arbored walk swiftly and reached my side as silently as the rustle of the soft wind. And there, for the first time, I kissed her and held her in my arms.

I wondered if it is not true that love's sweetest moments are those stolen from a harrassed and harrassing world. She stayed but a moment; a kiss, a whispered word, a crumpled note, and she was gone. I walked on and sat on a marble bench by the swimming pool, completely happy, in a dreamy paradise of spring.

When I returned to the house, I learned from the Pasha that under no circumstances would he permit me to remain at any place other than under his roof for the duration of my leave. Three weeks, three continuous weeks near my Jemileh.

I had no qualms about the meeting I had arranged with Jemileh, no touch of conscience, since it was the practice of Turkish youths and maids of the upper classes to meet clandestinely. Even in those days Turkish daughters of the upper classes abhorred the

restrictions of the harem and cast them aside whenever they could. Countless excuses were devised to get outside palace gates. Once free, they would gather together at an appointed meeting place and discard the flowing gowns and veils for the smartest European clothes they could obtain.

That night, at dinner, I tried to catch Jemileh's eyes, but the Pasha kept me completely occupied in his discussion of the war and with his dissatisfaction for the tyrannical rule of Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, and Talaat Pasha, the Minister of Interior, who were virtual dictators. The higher ranks of the Army seemed unanimous in deploring the policies of these men, yet their patriotism in the face of their country's emergency rendered them helpless. Muharrem's father was the first officer of higher rank who, I heard, openly regret that the Allies had failed, refused, he expressed it, to capture Constantinpole, and thus end the war.

The following day I arose early and under the pretext of important affairs in Stamboul I left at ten o'clock, telling them that I would not return until the following afternoon.

At Garabed's home I must have developed to be a complete nuisance to Mrs. Garabed. I fidgeted, I talked nervously of this and that, I walked all over the place and got in the way of the servants, and upon an uncomputed number of times I asked Mrs. Garabed whether or not she thought that my Jemileh could get away. And an untold number of times she reassured me it could be done.

One o'clock, and no Jemileh. To this day I remem-

ber my theatrical despair. "And to think," I gestured vehemently, "to think that I believed myself to be a lucky man."

Someone knocked. My heart stopped beating, it must have. In the calm light of meditation and under the long shadow of the years since that day, such an assertion must be extravagant and absurd. Yet I am sure that it is true; for an instant my heart stopped beating.

Mrs. Garabed answered it herself. All I recall is that suddenly I was alone in the reception room with Jemileh in my arms.

I kissed her, not with the hard rushing fervor of your American kiss, but with the soft, tremulous kiss that love gives. I was young and I wanted her more than anything else in all the world. I wanted her eternally. She was all of life to me, and I loved her infinitely.

We whispered of devotion and she cried like the fragile child she was, cried for happiness, she said, and at the thought of our soon parting.

Later, when she was composed and smiling again, we drove to a remote shore of the Bosphorous where Jemileh would not be known. We rented a boat for the afternoon, and drifted on the blue waters, and talked of love. And there was no other living being in the world except us two. How can so much happiness be crowded into so little a space of time! She sang softly and some place on the shore a bell twinkled. No dream ever could be half so enchanting as these our first hours alone together.

Evening shadows had crept upon the setting sun

before we engaged a landau and drove toward the city. I remained at Garabed's that night and Jemileh engaged another landau and was driven off to the palace, but not before we had planned another holiday.

My leave then became a disconsolate roving of the Pasha's gardens between our holidays.

When the last week of my leave arrived and our final holiday had come upon us, when we met at Garabed's, she clung to me, her pretty face drawn and her great black eyes like stars, and begged that I never leave her. She said that she felt as though we should never see each other again.

I laughed, but the truth is, I wondered what would be in store for me on the Gallioppli.

We drove again that last day to that remote shore of the Bosphorous, but not so gaily. We spoke but seldom.

On our way I saw a lake, and instead, we stopped there, and we wandered along the paths around and watched silver fish dart in the cool, clear waters. Jemileh had removed her veil and swung it carelessly in her hand. Once it caught upon a bush. I remember yet how carefully I removed it. We found a quiet spot and sat there. I whispered and kissed her hand and lips. She unloosened a tiny charm which she wore around her veil upon a silver chain and asked me to wear it always next my heart. She said that a noted sorcerer had made it and had sworn in the name of Allah that the wearer always would be protected against violent death.

I did not laugh or even smile, but kissed it very tenderly and placed it in the pocket next my heart.

May I have your pardon, if I seem to be sentimentalizing but all of this happened when I was young, and the memory that lingers after all these years, still is dear to me.

In three more days, I was in camp with my new command. On the fourth day, at 8 a. m. the last artillery battalion had boarded the train and I was bidding farewell to the Pasha and his wife. Jemileh and her sister did not accompany them. The Pasha's wife cried as she told me that on the previous night they had received word from Muharrem of the dangerous position of the Turkish forces, and of the major engagements which were impending as the enemy reinforcements began gathering. Jemileh, she told me, could not be comforted.

It was a sad parting and I was not happy to go; my heroism, I guess, was not up to the occasion. I did not want to go. The Pasha gripped my hand and held it long and entreated the blessing of Allah for my protection.

A last salute and I left them there, two sad dear old people, and jumped on the moving train.

CHAPTER VI

The Gallipoli Peninsula Battle Front

My new duty was as Commander of a battalion in a regiment of that famous Turkish division which had dared the guns of the Allies and had crossed the Suez Canal despite them. Eighty per cent of its original personnel of officers and men had been lost in one of the great heroic feats of the War in the East.

Less than a few weeks previous to my appointment, the remnants of this division had returned from the Suez and its depleted numbers replaced by the best men of the reserve forces stationed in Constantinople. Recruited to its former strength it was now bound for the Gallipoli Peninsula front.

I learned that the English had succeeded in landing two large expeditionary forces, one in the vicinity of Sed-ul-Bahr and another in Ari Burnu, near Anaforta or Sulva Bey. The French had effected landings on the Anatolian side, had crossed the Gallipoli Peninsula and joined with the right flank of the British Army at Kerevis Dereh. These land forces were protected by the enemy war ships at the entrance to the Dardanelles and those in the Gulf of Saros. The same fleet which had shrunk away from its victory on March 18th was now covering by fire the operation of the land forces.

Our regiment was scheduled to take up its position near Alchi Tepeh, only a stone's throw from the en-

emy's fortification, at what used to be the Turkish Sed-ul-Bahr.

How to get to our position was another question. British submarines had found a safe route through the mines of the Dardanelles, and for the past few months had appeared regularly in the Sea of Marmora sinking an increasing number of Turkish supply ships. The route by water could not be attempted. On the other hand, the Berlin-Constantinople line on which we were traveling, had been destroyed by enemy gun fire beyond the terminal of Ouzoun Kupri in Western Thrace.

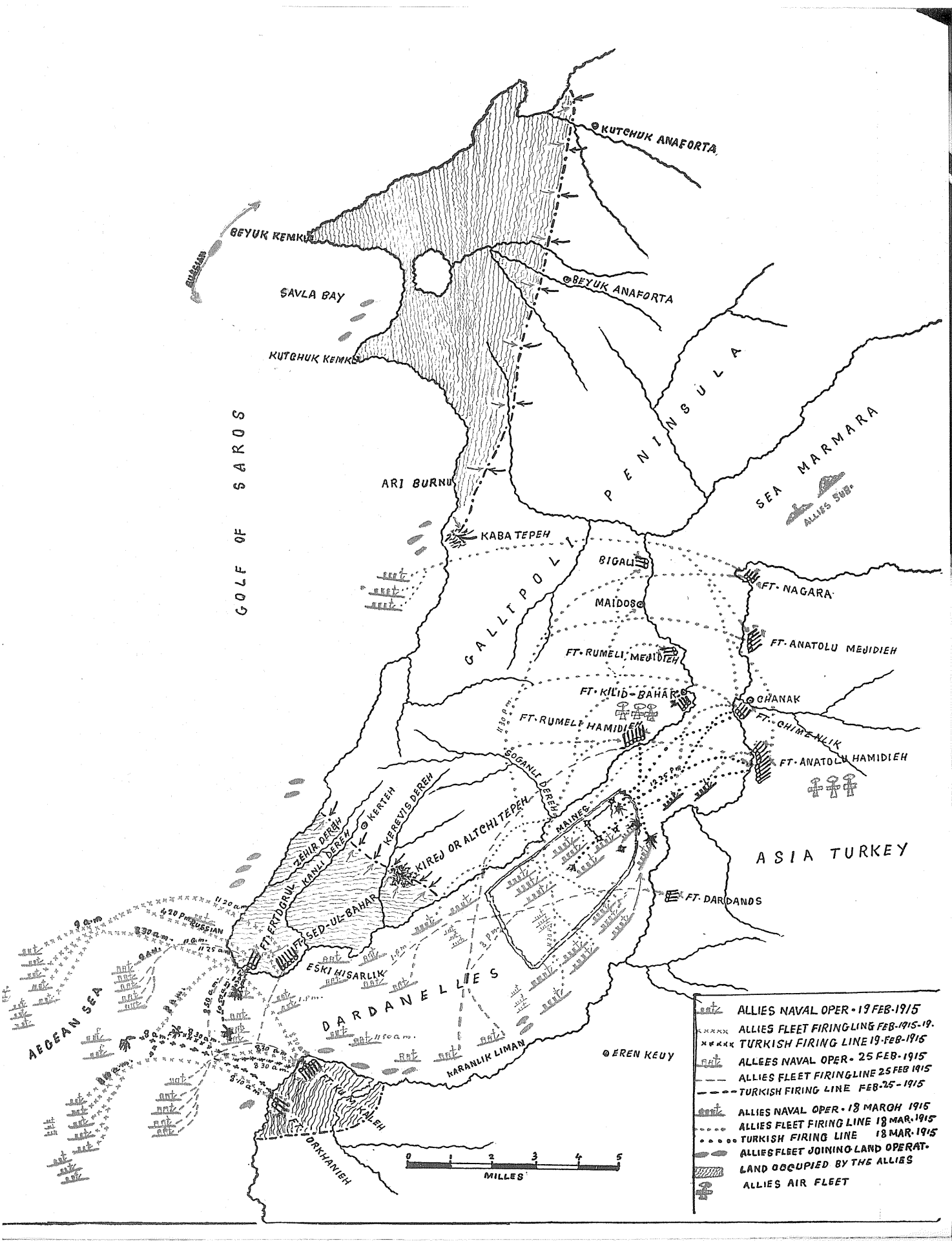
There was nothing for us but a march to cover the intervening distance.

After leaving Ouzoun Kupri we marched for four days and toward the evening of the fourth day came to the hills directly back of Alchi Tepeh. Here, we were ordered to get our battery in readiness to protect several companies of infantry which were there.

The hills in the region of Alchi Tepeh are not far from the entrance to the Dardanelles, and the land is very narrow between the strait and the Gulf of Saros. The position was under the direct fire of both the British and French warships, and hence to avoid detection, we found it necessary to change the placement of our battery every three or four hours.

Hardly had we established ourselves when the German General Von Sanders, who was directing the operations of the land forces on the Dardanelles, ordered a general attack on the British positions. Our forces we estimated at forty thousand men.

I was directed to take up a position near the village of Kirteh, a half mile west of Alchi Tepeh. I rushed


KUTCHUK ANAFORTA
BEYUK KEMKUM
SAVLA BAY
BEYUK ANAFORTA
KUTCHUK KEMKUM
GOLF OF SAROS
ARI BURNU
PENINSULA
SEA MARMARA
ALLIES SUB.
KABA TEPEH
GALLIPOLI
BIGALI
FT. NAGARA
MAIDOS
FT. ANATOLU MEJIDIEH
FT. RUMELI MEJIDIEH
FT. KILID-BAHAR
CHANAK
FT. RUMELI HAMIDIEH
FT. CHIMENLIK
FT. ANATOLU HAMIDIEH
SOGANLI DEREH
KERTEH
KERVES DEREH
KIREJ OR ALTCHI TEPEH
MAINES
ASIA TURKEY
FT. DARDANOS
FT. ERTOGRUL
ZEHIR DEREH
KANLI DEREH
SED-UL-BAHAR
ESKI HISARLIK
AEGEAN SEA
DARDANELLES
EREN KEUY
NARANLIK LIMAN
ALEH
ORKHANIEH
MILLES
ALLIES NAVAL OPER. 19 FEB. 1915
ALLIES FLEET FIRING LINE FEB. 1915-19.
TURKISH FIRING LINE 19 FEB. 1915
ALLEES NAVAL OPER. 25 FEB. 1915
ALLIES FLEET FIRING LINE 25 FEB 1915
TURKISH FIRING LINE FEB. 25 - 1915
ALLIES NAVAL OPER. 18 MARCH 1915
ALLIES FLEET FIRING LINE 18 MAR. 1915
TURKISH FIRING LINE 18 MAR. 1915
ALLIES FLEET JOINING LAND OPERAT.
LAND OCCUPIED BY THE ALLIES
ALLIES AIR FLEET

my battery to that point as the attack was scheduled to take place early the next morning, June 4, 1915.

After carefully ascertaining the enemies' position and setting my guns at proper range, I held my men in readiness for further orders.

At 4:00 a. m. the telephone wires began to hum and the time for advance had come. Several large military bands blared patriotic airs.

If you have gone through battle and known the havoc that shell fire causes among men and things, you cannot but stand in awe at the folly and courage of line after line marching men, starting bravely down a hillside as the first faint streaks of dawn break through the lingering darkness. I stood there in solemn wonderment as I watched those Turkish soldiers advance toward the British positions shouting the name of Allah.

Our artillery of eight powerful batteries now opened fire to cover the advance. I watched our distance carefully but could not be sure whether our aim was effective.

Not a sound came from the enemy; even their searchlights were turned off.

The Turkish infantry continued to advance and reached the barbed wire entanglements surrounding the British trenches.

Suddenly the searchlights of the fleet were turned on and the warships began to vigorously respond to our artillery fire. They poured volley after volley of shell and shrapnel upon our men. They were caught like drowning rats in a rain of death. Bedlam was home again: the roar of great guns, rifle fire, machine

guns staccato, screams, moans of dying men and unbelievable as it may seem, the blare of bands encouraging men on to heroic and vain death. It was insane and undescribably awful.

Forty-five hellish minutes the fire continued, and before the morning sun was over the horizon, a sea of men had been swept to eternity, and the earth a charnel house of torn and bruised bodies, of heaps of the dead and the maimed and the dying.

The firing ceased and for the next fifteen minutes I focused my eyes on that valley of desolation in which moved only half dead things that once had been men.

Soon an army of British and French soldiers came over the top of the trenches and under the protection of heavy artillery fire began to clamber up the hill to our main position, Alchi Tepeh.

The Turks cautiously waited until the enemy had reached the second line of their trenches. Then followed a terrific hand to hand battle of slashing bayonets. The French and English lost heavily in this encounter and were forced to retreat.

Quiet again. Neither side had gained ground and death had the victory. The red cross units gathered in the wounded and the stretcher bearers splattered through the pools of blood. The dead were buried. And I do not know, some men may have wondered for whom they were fighting and why. Behind the fronts women who once had listened to the words of men whom they had loved, now had but memories to thrill them. Instead of men to embrace, they had dreams. But, of course, all of this is as it should be; wars are very important events.

Until June 21st all was quiet on the Gallipoli front, in the region of Alchi Tepeh. On that date the French contingents at Kerevis Dereh made an early morning attack upon the Turkish trenches and captured three of them.

All quiet again until June 23rd, when they resumed the attack. After heavy artillery fire on both sides and minor infantry engagements the French failed to make further headway.

Respite again; and I do not know which was worse, war or the terrible nervous tension of waiting. Would the enemy attack tomorrow, tonight, today, within an hour or the next minute? Or would our own headquarters order a sudden attack? No rest, just idle tension that put the nerves on edge.

On June 28th it came; a fierce bombardment from every point along the British and French lines. It lasted for two days without letup, and on the morning of June 30th five more Turkish trenches fell. Turkish losses had been very heavy and most of our remaining forces started to retreat in disorder.

So far as my battery was concerned my guns were intact and I had no casualties, but my men were completely wearied from the long strain of the battle. So was I, and when another battery relieved us, I was as glad as my men.

Behind the lines at a rest station I obtained permission to cross the strait to a point near the city of Chanak, where Muharrem was stationed. We exchanged experiences and talked of home and carefully avoided any suggestion that either one of us ever was in danger. After that; until well into July we managed to

exchange visits fairly regularly for the fighting had settled down to infrequent infantry sorties and the exchange of artillery fire.

The month of July witnessed only a few lesser contests which always resulted in Turkish losses, however. Several times the enemy fleet bombarded our positions. Our artillery responded in kind and neither side seemed willing to risk a decisive general offensive.

It was not until the early part of August that the Turks launched a second major attack and just about the time that the British landed forces in Sulva Bay (Anaforta). It was but another orgy of blood and terror and suffering, a madness of murder by rifle bullet, shrapnel, and bayonet.

The Turkish Army continued to lose heavily but doggedly maintained its position despite the greater advantage of the Allies protected by their powerful fleet.

To add to the misery and human waste of life the torrid months of summer brought in their wake an epidemic of typhus. I sometimes think that the cooling winds of September were all that saved both forces from being completely annihilated.

The morning of September 29th dawned like the September days which had preceded it, bright, cool, inauspicious. The campaign for weeks had been one of small encounters and occasional shelling on both sides.

The incident I now relate may seem like a tale from Eastern romance, or the cross section of an impossible story, yet it was cruelly true. I shall not try to sentimentalize about it, not to give it a glamor it did not have. It was too poignantly real to be glamorous, and

my senses had been so dulled and used to death, that my mind seemed to be a great void in which sorrow dully groped.

On the morning of September 29th I received a message that Muharrem had been seriously wounded and insisted upon seeing me at once.

I obtained leave for the day, placed my lieutenants in charge of my battery and somehow, I don't know how, I got to the other side of the strait, where I found the hospital, and in it Muharrem, just a swath of bandages on the cot; two burning eyes showing and swollen bluish lips.

The surgeon of the ward told me that Muharrem had not the slightest chance; he was a mess of wounds and had been bleeding internally.

I sat down by his bed and found his hand, seemingly the only unbandaged part of his body, and squeezed it and smiled, and said he would be around in fine shape soon, and what did he mean by getting in the way of a shell. My voice seemed to me as flat and banal as the inadequate lies it said, for he knew that I was lying and knew that I knew it. His fever-brilliant eyes tried to smile at me, and the image of them in his bandaged head haunts me yet. This was my dearest friend, my inseparable companion through the finest young years of my life, a dying mummy bandaged. Why? For what purpose? In one instant, all the days that we had spent together seemed to pass before me. The fun we had had, our careers, and the plans for the days to come; all were in my mind, and they must have been in his too, only he knew that his dreams would never come true. The enormous, senseless cruelty of war

seemed to crush down upon and make me speechless.

He tried to speak and his voice was just a husky whisper through puffed lips. I pleaded with him not to try his strength, but he insisted he knew he would die, and that despite everything he wanted to tell me a secret.

And the secret he had to tell me was of Jemileh. His voice was low and dry, yet he hardly faltered but for pain as he told me her story. It was then that I recalled how Muharrem's mother had drawn him aside on that spring day, when we had felt that war was a lark.

Obviously it is impossible for me, after the lapse of years, to tell the story as Muharrem told it to me, so I must relate it briefly, as I compose it again in memory.

"I want to tell you of my sister Jemileh," he whispered in that strange new tone of voice of his. "During the Armenian massacre of 1896 my father was commander of an army brigade stationed near Mush. Even at that time he was deeply aggrieved over Turkish excesses in dealing with their Christian subjects. One day, while passing through an Armenian village, he picked up a little girl, hardly more than two years old, whom he found wandering aimlessly about the deserted streets. No trace of her parents was found, and out of pity, or love, or sorrow my father took her home with him. Eventually she was accepted into the family. My mother, however, objected to a cross tattooed on her upper left arm and applied an acid solution to destroy the Christian emblem; it left a queer shaped scar."

"Both my parents looked forward to my marriage

with her, but you have long known of my love for Nourieh, while, forgive me, I have noticed your love for Jemileh. I tell you this that you may know that she is one of your people, and that there is no Allah on the one side, or God on the other to keep you apart."

"My dearest friend, these things I have told you, are my secret. You will see Nourieh and tell her of my devotion, you will seek out my mother and sister and tell them of my love."

As I read over the words they sound theatrical, and the tale the imaginings of a fevered brain, but, too, they seemed impoverished things and but the mean shadows of what I saw and felt that night. It did not seem theatrical then, and, while I wished that my friend might live, I accepted his fatalism.

Two days later, on a dreary, rainy afternoon, he died; died while I sat by his bedside and clasped his hand. I was looking far away, and he seemed to be sleeping; his hand grew cold in mine.

A wind blew the rain and slashed it like a whip as I returned that night across the dark waters. It is not easy to lose a friend and suddenly feel yourself alone. Perhaps friendship is greater even than love, for I thought not of Jemileh but of Muharrem whose voice was gone forever; nowhere any place should I ever see him again, nor hear his laugh. Even in the charnel house of war death can touch a man and say, "though you see me every day, as men die by the hundreds, by the thousands, and come to hold me cheap, when I brush you closely by, there is a hurt I still can leave in your heart."

I wanted to obtain a leave of absence to go to the

Pasha, but the enemy pressed us more closely and attacked even more frequently so a hastily written letter must suffice. For three months the Allies pressed us, and each activity resulted in another Turkish slaughter until I sometimes wondered if the man power of Turkey would not be wiped out on that Gallipoli Peninsula front. Yet this endless battle resulted in no apparent gain to the enemy.

Once again I began to ponder upon Allied tactics, and once again I concluded that the Allies did not want Constantinpole. It was not war, but needless human slaughter in the name of diplomacy.

Any military mind must have wondered why the Allies never landed large armies on the farthermost points of the Gallipoli Peninsula and in the region of Sulva Bay. It would have been a simple matter for the Allied Fleet to steam up the Gulf of Saros to the extreme neck of the peninsula and then land forces, which would close up the Turkish Army in the narrow strip of land beneath, cutting off all communication with Contantinople. The spectre of the Russian bear astride the straits prevented such a simple and effective maneuver.

While the French and English armies were entrenched on the Gallipoli Peninsula, their Russian ally was making steady progress through the northeastern section of Asia Minor. By December, 1915, their troops already had crossed the Caucasian Front for a distance of several hundred miles and during the latter part of January 1916 occupied a section close to the city of Erzerum.

At the same time another powerful Russian army

Captain Torossian and comrades returning from mission to Sheik Mousa.

had pushed its way through the Persian front, and by the first week in January, had reached the city of Hamadan: the objective being to unite with the British forces in Mesopotamia.

News came to us that the Turkish leaders again were preparing to evacuate Constantinople as the capital. It was a repetition of March 18, 1915; the French and English were pounding at the door again.

For the second time the unexpected happened, and again the Turks made the mistake of thanking Allah, when they should have thanked French and English diplomacy.

With the Turkish forces offering less and less resistance and with their casualties mounting to impossible numbers, the French and English suddenly decided to evacuate the region of the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the nights of January 8–9, 1916, the enemy troops were embarked on waiting ships and steamed away leaving great quantities of war materials and foodstuffs behind.

Immediately, all troops, except a skeleton force, were withdrawn from the Dardanelles and the Turks set about to reorganize the shattered regiments to help ward off the Russian threat.

Let us return again to the Persian and Caucasian fronts and see what followed.

Turkish forces from the Mesopotamia front, marching north toward the Caucasian Front, had hoped to break the Russian line and save some of the larger Turkish cities from falling into Russian hands. By the middle of February, however, the Turkish attacks had been repulsed with severe losses: over 40,000

Turks were killed and about 20,000 taken prisoner. Everywhere the Russians were victorious. The prosperous cities of Van, Bitlis, and Moush were in their possession as well as many important surrounding towns and the port of Trabizon, the largest on the Black Sea. The last day of April 1916 found the Russians within 445 miles of Constantinople.

Conditions on the Persian front, however, assumed at first a mysterious aspect. The Russian forces, which had been pushing through Persia to the city of Hamadan with a view to uniting with the British forces in Mesopotamia, found that the English apparently were loath to move. In the meantime the Turks had brought up reserves from Gallipoli and during the latter part of May succeeded in throwing back the Russians.

But where was the English General Townshend and his brigade of 19,000 men stationed in the city of Kut El Amara? And why had they stood still for three months? The Russians must have pondered these questions too.

Strange and fantastic as it may seem, General Townshend, on April 29, 1916, surrendered to a Turkish force of less than one-third his strength.

The Turkish generals were so surprised at his surrender that General Townshend had to explain that his brigade had been occupying Mesopotamia solely for the purpose of protecting British interests in India and Persia from alien enemies.

The bewildered Turks had barely recovered from their good fortune and the general's last remark, when something still more startling happened. General Townshend offered to pay off to the Turks three hun-

dred thousand British pounds sterling if his forces were granted their freedom under solemn promise that at no time would they ever molest the Turk on the Mesopotamia front or any other.

It was a huge sum of money, and not only startling but also attractive to the Turks; only the presence of their German allies and advisers prevented them from accepting such a noble bribe. General Townshend's brigade, therefore, had surrendered unconditionally and needlessly and were prisoners of war. The price the men of that British brigade paid in blood and torture is perhaps unequalled in the annals of history. Diplomacy had scored another point which most of the 19,000 men never lived to see.

General Townshend was sent to Constantinople and given a palace on the Bosphorus for internment, but his men did not fare so happily.

At first the men were divided according to nationality, then according to religion. Over three thousand of them were robbed of their clothing, maltreated and subjected to every possible form of cruelty and human indignity. Hundreds were murdered outright. Only those of Indian origin and those British colonials who professed the Mohammedan religion were given any consideration. Even the three hundred British officers were not immune and were subjected to hundreds of miles of forced marches without proper food or medical care. But a very small percentage of General Townshend's brigade ever reached the confines of Constantinople and Aski-Shehir alive.

Several months after the surrender and the disbursement of troops, I passed through the Mesopotamian

valley on my way to Mosul. At Darra, the ancient capital city of King Darius, I saw the bones and skeletons of what must have been five hundred men. The first fact I noted was that the hair on all of them was brownish in color; it was obvious that the skeletons were neither of Armenians nor of Turks.

Later I learned from the natives and from bragging local officials and officers that several hundreds or more British soldiers had been robbed, denuded and then forced into the huge pit in which most of the skeletons lay. The pit was connected to a stream from which it was flooded and the prisoners drowned exactly as in the days of the elder King Darius.

I have called them skeletons, but many of them were still in varying stages of decomposition.

The deaths of heroes are indeed sometimes strange.

CHAPTER VII

The Secret of the Harem

After months of fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula, our division had been almost annihilated. On January 14, 1916, the survivors started on their way back to Constantinople for a brief interval to be reorganized and newly equipped. Hundreds of men would have to be trained to replace casualties. It was no small task and would require several months. I was given command of the First Battalion of Reserve Artillery stationed at Rami Kishla, on the banks of the Golden Horn.

A week's leave was granted before I assumed my new command.

It was almost noon when I wandered down the streets of Stamboul, impatient for the few hours to pass until I would be at Muharrem's again. Jemileh—the afternoon when Muharrem had died—my parents—why had I not heard from them? My thoughts were a medley of ever growing doubts, of vanishing hopes, of embittered sorrows. I stopped at the telegraph office. I sent another message to my parents and directed that the answer be sent to me at the Pasha's.

As I strolled idly along, I began to notice the great change that had taken place in that once prosperous section. No longer women and children paraded in fashionable finery; their clothing was seedy and even

their postures seemed shabby and worn out. Hardships and scarcity were beginning to take their toll. I was witnessing a people on the verge of ruin. The lines in front of the baker shops awaiting their daily ration of bread were of people obviously undernourished, their faces thin, pale and drawn.

Every second doorway seemed draped in mourning. Stamboul, that beautiful spot of the Marmora, had the appearance of a woman who, through sickness, grief and old age, had lost her beauty and charm.

German officers crowded the few markets which remained open, buying up all available provisions for their families in the fatherland.

Exorbitant prices were demanded for the poorest foodstuffs, and in the markets household treasures daily were bartered for the merest necessities.

If such was the condition of the middle classes, I dreaded to think of the predicament of the poor which by far was the more numerous of the two. In one market, through which I loitered, I heard people talking of thousands of children dying of undernourishment and disease. I heard tell of bands of desperate women sallying forth at night to sack foodshops or attack an unsuspecting traveler.

Beggars lined the streets.

I walked on to the Sultan Bayazid district where the coffee shop of Emin Bey attracted me. I knew of it as a gathering place for high Turkish officials and the Mohammedan clergy. The thought struck me that if I entered and sat about a while I might learn something more about conditions in the interior and of any new developments in the Armenian situation.

I strolled through the main hall and came upon a neat little garden in the rear where several groups of officers and Turkish officials were sitting. The gist of their conversation was not hard to understand. As I stood there glancing around, I noticed a table at which four officers of high rank were sitting. I decided to trust to my medals to justify my boldness and approached them and smiled what I hoped was my most ingratiating smile and gave the usual Turkish salute, "Es-selaamalekum."

Conversation suddenly stopped as they looked me over. My medals did the trick. They arose and answered in chorus, "Alekum-es-selaam."

They became quite cordial and asked me to join the party. I felt reasonably sure that they did not suspect my Armenian origin.

I sensed, however, from the way their sharp eyes centered upon me that they were curious to know a little more about me.

One officer remarked that I looked tired and another asked where I had come from. As I took a cigarette he leaned over and insisted upon holding a match for me while he inspected my medals more closely.

"From the Dardanelles where I fought against the qiaours," I told them.

They were all interested and wanted to know if the infidels had many soldiers and whether or not they inflicted great losses on our lines.

"Not a bit," I lied, "especially since we exposed the Kherkhahi Sheref (holy robe) of Mohammed. We lost few, while the giaours lost many men.

There is nothing like a first class, unmitigated lie

to brighten people who would rather hear them than the truth.

They began to talk freely again. All agreed that the Turks soon would win the war, especially since the Bulgarians were won over.

"There are times," one remarked, "when even giaours are useful, but always it is better to hunt them like rabbits than to accept them as brothers."

It was not until they talked of the Armenians that they waxed eloquent. They hated the Armenians not only for their faith but because they controlled most of the commerce of Turkey. And they did not like the fact that Sunday was their Sabbath instead of Friday. That which bothered them most, however, seemed to be the fact that the wealthy Armenians had made a great deal more of money than the wealthy Turks. They ignored the fact that only a comparatively few Armenian Pashas and big merchants were so fortunate.

Their real satisfaction came when they discussed the measures which the party of the government had set in motion; a plan, astonishing and incredible as it may seem, to annihilate the Armenian race in Turkey. To one, not familiar with the fervor of their fanaticism, this conversation would sound like a mad dream. What concerned me more than all else was their complete confidence that the government had placed in all states as special agents officials capable and determined to carry out this gruesome plan.

I excused myself with a few commonplace remarks about my regiment and returned to the street, even more deeply concerned about my parents than ever before.

Captain Torossian on Mesopotamian front getting first aid treatment for hand wound at field hospital.

Landau were scarce so I returned to Direkler Arasi, a nearby military post where I had left my horse in charge of my orderly.

I did not feel myself too lucky a man as I rode in the direction of the Pasha's palace.

When I dismounted inside the palace gates, I was heavy of heart. The cold bareness of the leafless trees made the long avenue to the palace seem like the deserted approach to a mausoleum; the winter gloomy garden; the sombre mourning draped over the massive doorway. On the battle field death was grotesque and violent and yet so commonplace that the mind accepted it as the colorful cruelty of the days, but here far behind the lines death was a sombre fellow that chilled the heart.

A strang eunuch admitted me to the great entrance hall and into the presence of a drooping figure in black whom I hardly recognized as Muharrem's mother. She embraced me and cried in my arms as I tried to comfort her.

I inquired for the Pasha and for answer she seemed about to swoon. I helped her to a divan while the servants called Ferideh and Jemileh.

It might have been better had the eunuch not called the girls, for all they could do was to kneel at their mother's feet and join in her sobbing. I was in a position in which even a hero might feel helpless; and I think I stated before that I am no hero.

Finally the ladies managed to compose themselves. First Ferideh, then Jemileh—I kissed their hands.

Jemileh's eyes found mine and I saw in their dark

eloquence the eagerness that made my heart beat a little faster.

In a quietness unbroken but for my voice which sounded coarse and shouting I had to review the incidents attendant to my friend's death and it was not a happy task. No one spoke when I had finished; they sat there a huddled group in a place which for the first time seemed barren and empty. Persian rugs and gorgeous tapestries had disappeared. There were no priceless inlaid tables, no fine paintings; not even a vase was about. A few divans and ottomans with meager rugs before them were scattered about the now too spacious room.

After a time I learned that they had been obliged to part with most of their treasures and beggared themselves that they might support the never ceasing government loans which the Pasha's wife felt were worthless. She was very bitter against the government.

"We suffered and endured," she said, "until they took Muharrem. Then the Pasha became despondent and no longer could endure this place; the gardens, the trees, the old familiar paths all breathed memories of Muharrem.

"He remained for hours a a time in his study. He was so grieved that he wanted to leave Stamboul at once and arranged to go on a mission to Arabia where he is supposed to use his influence in securing the support of Arabian chieftains on the side of the Turks.

"Inside of two weeks we too shall be leaving as he wishes us to follow him."

I must have looked very stupid staring helplessly into space.

What was happening to my little personal world, I asked myself vaguely. My friend dead; my own parents' fate a matter of doubt; the separation from my sweetheart for months, perhaps years; my very dearest friends suddenly to be lost to me; I felt as a lost speck in a tumult of strange people. In a short time I would be adrift.

Muharrem's mother startled me from my seeming stupor by inquiring if I had heard from my parents. When I told her that I had not for two months she forgot her own sorrow in her effort to console me. She urged me not to worry because she was sure that my military record would save them, especially since a decree had been issued protecting from massacre or deportation the families of loyal Christian soldiers.

Late afternoon came upon us and still I had not had a moment to even whisper a single word to Jemileh alone. I arose to leave, but they would not hear of it. I must spend one last night in their palace and share their loneliness since in a world of war that seemed all that was left to women.

And to some men too, I thought.

Before dinner I did manage to whisper to Jemileh, "Garabed's, Friday—at two."

The next day I wandered the last time through the winter bare garden and sat alone by the bench near the pool.

The following three days passed slowly, each an eternity in length with a thousand seconds to a minute and a thousand hours to a day. Finally a message came presumably from my mother, stating that all were safe and well. The signature, however, made me suspicious;

for it was signed "Mrs. Vartoohi Torossian," whereas my mother always had signed her telegrams "Varteh Torossian."

I was far from satisfied that the telegram was valid, so I immediately wrote two letters to my mother, sending both by special delivery, but at different hours of the afternoon. It would require two weeks for an answer.

On Friday I met Jemileh at Garabed's and we left at once for a tiny suburb called Makrikoyh on the banks of Marmora.

It was a mild winter day, and we strolled along the empty beach until we came to a little pavilion. We sat in the solitude and I held her to my heart and kissed her.

Suddenly Muharrem's story seemed but the fevered gesture of a devoted friend. It did not seem that it possibly could be true, yet I felt that it was.

I was not a romantic figure and I sometimes wonder if I did not make love very stiffly. I think that I was abrupt.

I kissed her and did a thing I never had done before. I raised the flowing sleeves that covered her arms. I remember the frightened shadows that spoke from her big eyes. She offered her lips to me again and her lashes lowered.

"Do you carry an ugly scar on your arm," I asked anxiously, "your left arm?"

She seemed startled.

"Why, yes," she said, "but how could you know?"

It was as Muharrem had told me, a faint outline of cross under puckered tissue.

I garbled my words in my haste to tell her of the secret Muharrem had revealed to me. I wanted her to be infinitely happy, and I knew that her great worry always had been that she was of Moslem faith and never would be permitted to marry a Christian. The words tumbled from my tongue and she laughed in the joy of them.

Her eyes were so bright and her face so warm and flushed.

We stayed there until sunset and she began coughing. I admonished her to be careful and scolded her for catching cold.

It was not a new cold, she said, but just an old one that wanted to stay with her as she wanted to stay with me.

She was very quiet on her way back to Garabed's and so was I. She began crying and pleaded with me that I keep her with me somehow. She seemed fearful that once parted we should never see each other again. She talked of a queer premonition she had and of the dangers of war.

I wanted her more than anything on earth, yet I realized how impossible it was and so did she.

We talked of love being immortal and pledged ourselves forever. She began coughing again and I threw my cloak about her shoulders.

The ride was very long, for the landau which I had managed to hire was drawn by a very aged horse. A long and happy ride of love and plans and visions of the future.

That was our last holiday together.

The next morning my leave was over.

One week later, the Pasha's wife and daughters left for Arabia, and I went down to Haidar Pasha station to see them off.

A large gathering of friends and relatives was there to see them off, so I stood to one side.

Jemileh saw me and waved to me and before I knew it she was in my arms and I was kissing her. Even as I kissed her, I wondered what would happen to Jemileh, for there were Turkish ladies of the upper social class present and they adhered strictly to the conventions of their caste. But war and parting can make even patricians indulgent.

Then the Pasha's wife and Ferideh embraced and called on Allah Akber (grand Allah) and the spirit of Muharrem to protect me.

A whistle blew, there was noise and bustle, moving cars and waving handkerchiefs, and then for me there was nothing but a loneliness so utter and extinguishing that the world seemed a deserted waste in which shadows of people moved and I stood alone.

CHAPTER VIII

The Sad Fate of My Parents

Those were days of great alarm in which no time was left for brooding. Those were exhaustive days. From morning to night bustle and rush and the training of raw recruits under adverse conditions.

A batch of Turkish peasant lads would arrive and within six weeks we were to teach them the rudiments of military service and put them through the most intensive training that they might be rushed to the insatiable maws of the battle fronts. I sometimes marvel how we were able to teach them at all for, lacking education, they seemed impossibly slow of mind.

One thing they had been taught and that was an implicit belief and acceptance of the fate which Allah had ordained for them. I felt that it was fortunate for us officers that they had that belief else never would they have so stolidly borne their intolerable lot.

To me their lot seemed unendurable. Life in the barracks was one of impossible filth, sanitation was unknown; insufficient food was served from equally filthy and ill-kept kitchens.

At meal time, they became little better than beasts. Their daily rations were one-quarter of a pound of meat, six ounces of rice and two and a quarter pounds of bread per man with the consequence that they were always famished. When the dinner trumpet blew, there was a scramble for a place on the floor of the

barracks. Each company of eight sat in a circle holding wooden spoons raised in the air as though awaiting a charge. Ten-quart pails of thin soup with a small portion of boiled meat in it were placed in the center of each group by the corporals who then proceeded to cut the meat up into nine small pieces. Then the signal to proceed was given and each one thrust his spoon ravenously into the pail and tried to swallow as much of the liquid as possible. Dinner over—greasy fingers, spoons wiped in the folds of uniforms, and Allah praised.

Their wages, twenty cents a month.

Day after day we hustled them through and day after day I awaited word from my mother.

Around the middle of February I no longer could restrain my anxiety and uneasiness, so appealed to the War Office for assistance in obtaining knowledge as to the fate of my people. I had received no replies to my special delivery letters and my weekly telegrams had been ignored.

Enver Pasha's secretary received me and upon hearing my story dispatched a telegram to the Kaymakam (district chief) of Everek, requesting that he inform the war office at once of the whereabouts of Captain Torossian's family. The secretary was sincerely solicitous and told me to return in two days by which time he should have an answer.

When I returned upon the second day I could see from his face the news was as I had expected. He let me read the telegram signed Zeki, Kaymakam of Everek and addressed to the Minister of War. It advised that the family of Sarkis Bey Torossian, Cap-

Captain Torossian meets his sister in the desert near Tel-Halif.

tain of Artillery in his excellency's army, had been deported by mistake and that he was endeavoring to locate them and bring them safely back to their home.

I felt outraged, though helpless, and implored the secretary to take the matter up himself and try to trace them. He sent several telegrams to points along the trails of the Armenian refugees and bade me return at the end of the week.

Week after week I returned to the War Office, each time returned more dejected, more disheartend. It simply could not be possible that my mother and father were staggering along under the lash of criminals and perverts, released from the prisons for that purpose. Perhaps my father even then lay dead by the wayside, carrion for vultures.

Finally one holiday I wandered into a section of Constantinople where, according to Garabed, a few people from Everek still were engaged in small business. I found one of them who confided in me that an Armenian family from Everek had arrived in the city the night before and were hiding in a house in a nearby street.

I found the address and knocked repeatedly, but no one answered. I thought that I saw a curtain drawn aside and spoke in Armenian asking admittance. A frightened old woman looked out. I asked her to open the door as there was nothing to fear, but still she hesitated, evidently suspicious of my uniform. I suppose that it was impossible to believe her eyes—that an Armenian in the uniform of a Turkish officer was standing before her. On hearing the name Toros-

sian, however, she admitted me as she had known my family in Everek.

She led me to a garret on the topmost floor and opened what appeared to be a closet door and softly called, "Krikor."

A door in the rear of the closet slowly opened and a man's face peered cautiously out.

I explained my mission and he came out and embraced me for sheer joy, I suppose, of learning that he had not fallen into the hands of the Turks.

Later, seated together on a cot in the dingy garret, he told me the story of Everek. His still youthful face was lined and gaunt, his eyes carried the look of a haunted man. I shall let him speak as I remember his words.

"As far back as June 6, 1915," he told me, "the atrocities of the city of Everek began. All able bodied Armenians were forced to walk many miles outside the city, supposedly on their way to build roads and bridges for the army. Instead, they were shot down and murdered, and their bodies strewn throughout the surrounding woods.

"Next, the woman and children were driven from their homes and deported to unknown destinations; the majority of them, we learned, died of starvation and exposure as they trudged wearily day after day over the mountain roads. At that time, Captain, your parents were not disturbed, because you were an officer in the Turkish army.

"I luckily escaped and took refuge in the home of an influential Turkish friend in a nearby village. From an attic window I witnessed that pitiable exodus, as

hundreds of healthy, robust young men marched through the streets under heavy guard.

"Under cover of darkness that night I returned to our home and found my wife and child who were hidden in the dugout, built in the lower cellar of our home. They were frightened and sick from their hours of confinement in the foul air. I carried them upstairs and revived them.

"I pondered how to get them safely out of Everek.

"Returning to the home of my Turkish protector I sought his further assistance and advice. He was afraid of the authorities but wanted to be kind, so he agreed to send one of his servants to my home the next day to rescue my wife and child. The servant was to carry a Turkish robe and veil for my wife and suitable Turkish garb for my child.

"He fulfilled his promise and my famliy was able to pass through the city gates unnoticed.

"For eight weeks I lived with this family and earned my bread by selling cotton and silk thread and other sewing necessities to the surrounding villages.

"Soon, however, my Turkish friend began to show signs of anxiety and restlessness and hinted that the great Allah was frowning upon him for sheltering a Christian under his roof. I decided to make another secret visit to Everek to see if conditions had settled down sufficiently to permit our safe return.

"I found the consternation and fear and confusion unabated. Already hundreds of families in the northern section of the city were being forcibly ejected from their homes and deported.

"At that time I met and talked with your parents

who were desperately trying to defend themselves against the persecution of Kaymakam Zeki. Since you were known to be an officer in the Turkish army your parents' case was too familiar to everyone.

"Zeki was sending his agents daily to their home and threatening deportation unless they accepted Mohammedanism and gave your young sister in marriage to his cousin's son. It was a deliberate persecution, for he knew the old Christians could never change their faith, their traditions and convictions of life had grown upon them.

"He steadily refused to deliver your letters to them, and when your mother went to his office to complain, he treated her in the vilest manner. He admonished her not to have any faith in her officer son, as he might be killed any day. Once he became enraged and had the guards throw her in the street. Your father, of course, was in even greater distress as he did not know when they might murder him and your mother and sister be left alone at the mercy of Zeki the Beast, as we called him.

"That is all I know of your parents and sister, for my Turkish friend had been listening to a sermon of the Hoja (Mohammedan chaplain), who had wrathfully denounced all Turks befriending Armenians and threatened them with the loss of Jennette (Paradise) and hence I had to leave."

When I left Krikor, after thanking my friend and giving him what money I could spare, I hurried back to our encampment and spent the evening preparing a petition to the Minister of War in which I denounced the action taken by the Kaymakam of Ev-

erek. I related my service in the Turkish Army, recalled to him any decorations, and pled that the wrong done my parents be vindicated at once.

Two days later I was requested to call at the War Office. Enver Pasha's secretary again greeted me and assured me of his concern. He showed me a letter which he had attached to my petition. It was addressed to Talaat Pasha, Minister of the Interior, and signed by Enver Pasha. It advised His Excellency, Talaat Pasha that the War Office had heard with great indignation that Kaymakam Zeki of Everek had wilfully and deliberately persecuted and deported the family of Captain Torossian, contrary to existing laws. Demand was made that the Kaymakam be punished and that Captain Torossian's family be traced and trnsported to Constantinople.

The secretary placed the documents in an envelope and instructed me to take them to the Office of the Interior, and if possible, deliver them in person to Talaat Pasha.

I suppose that the agitation of my mind must have been manifest to Talaat Pasha's secretary, when finally I was escorted to his presence through an endless line of guards and special agents. Perhaps the tone of my voice betrayed the hatred that had welled up within me and the anger at my helplessness. I saw him look in the direction of my holster.

He informed me that His Excellency Talaat Pasha was in conference but that if I would divulge the nature of my visit he might be able to help me. I think that he was as uneasy as I was.

I informed him that it was important that I deliver the papers to His Excellency personally.

"Sorry," he said vainly, "but that is impossible. The Pasha sees no one except by appointment."

Later I felt that perhaps it was just as well I did not obtain that private audience, my heart was too bitter and my thoughts again turned to revenge.

When I left the building of the Department of the Interior I knew that I could expect little help from them.

The law, according to Moustesna kanonou, (was that the families of non-Moslem soldiers were exempt from persecution). However, Talaat Pasha disregarded this law, even to the point of causing hatred between himself and Enver Pasha. Those who stood in the way of Talaat Pasha were murdered either openly or secretly.

One morning as I was inspecting the soldiers drilling at Rami Kashla, in the presence of many spectators, a woman, her eyes full of tears, worried and sad, approached me, and speaking in Turkish, said in a pitiful voice, "My dear officer, I am an Armenian woman from Angora. My name is Annik. About three months ago the Turks took away my husband to make him work on the road, and I have not heard from him since. Every day Turkish police come to my house and insult and beat me. I give them small sums of money, and then they go away. This has been going on for many days, and I determined to find some way to save myself from these outrageous acts."

I, as an Armenian, pitied her. I went to headquarters and obtained a certificate from Commander Ah-

med Bey. This pleased the woman very much, and she invited me to supper for the following Friday evening.

That Friday I went to the address, No. 15 Demir Kapan sokak, Bey Oglou (pera), an apartment owned by Mme. Sophie, an ancient Greek woman, who occupied several rooms on the first floor and also acted as janitress. I removed my sword, pistol, and belt and gave them to Mme. Sophie. She called Mme. Annik down, and later we went to the fourth floor apartment occupied by Mme. Annik. This apartment was furnished gorgeously, and everything was neat and clean. The place was permeated by Arabian perfumes, such as used by most Turkish women. No one was present except Mme. Annik and myself. She soon began to talk about her troubles.

At just about eight o'clock she offered to serve wine, but I refused. Supper was ready at eight-thirty and she urged me to take a few drinks before dining. I took just two glasses. Right after supper, while I was drinking the Turkish coffee, I heard some excited human voices. Becoming suspicious, I opened the apartment door and ran toward the hallway. The voices were coming from the stairway below and I heard someone calling: "Deli giaour yokaredader, ishini Bitiredjegis." (crazy infidel is upstairs, we will finish him.)

It was exactly nine o'clock, the time set.

I returned to the room quickly, and there seized a big knife and ran out again. In the meantime the crowd was coming upstairs.

Mme. Annik held an oil lamp in her hands. I struck

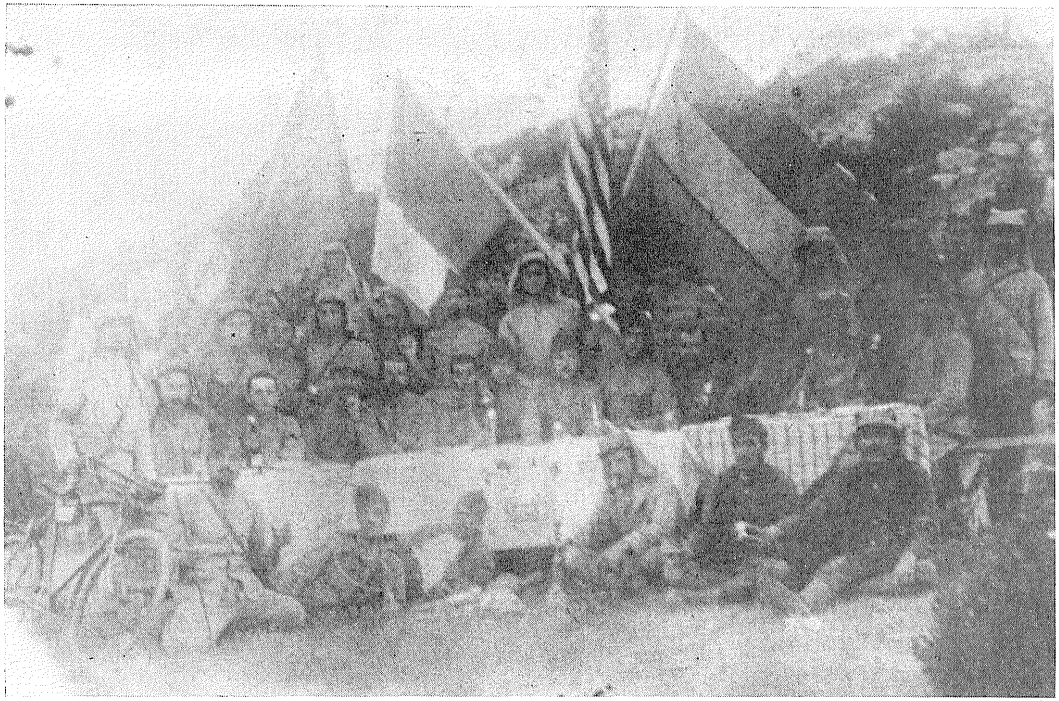
this lamp and it dropped to the floor and shattered. I pushed her back into the room, closed the door, and rushed out. I could have protected myself if I had had my pistol and sword, and I longed to run downstairs to get them, but there was no possibility of that, so I jumped, striking the floorlight, and thus left them in the dark. In the confusion they began to hit each other, because they thought I was among them. At the same time several of them called out: "Giaour Zehir Teesir itmenish dir Katchalem" (the poison has not affected the infidel, let us run away.)

This was Mme. Annik's plan to kill me. I knew it to be impossible to go down to the second floor, as some were waiting there. I ran back upstairs and went to the roof. I became sick and dizzy, and I started to vomit. After sitting near a chimney for fifteen or twenty minutes, I looked about for a method of escape from this trap.

The adjoining apartment roof was one floor below. I jumped down, forced open the attic door and entered. It was pitch dark all around. I lit matches and found the stairway.

On the second floor I saw a light through a keyhole. I peeped in and saw a young girl lying in bed reading a book, with her mother knitting nearby.

I opened the door and ran in. This girl and her mother, terror-stricken, began to scream. I said to them, "Don't call out, there is no danger to you if you keep quiet." I explained what had happened, and I begged this woman to get my sword and pistol from Mme. Sophie's apartment and tell her not to disclose my whereabouts.



Group of Armenian volunteers from America serving with the French under General Allenby. Notice the Star Spangled Banner held tight in their midst. Two brothers of Captain Torossian are in the group.

Five minutes later she brought them to me and said that there were more than ten gendarmes and police searching the apartments, upstairs.

I went out through the back door and walked about one block to reach the main street, where I took a landau and went straight to Rami Keshla.

Early next morning, I went to the War Department and reported the incident to Riza Bey. Together, we went to the office of Enver Pasha's secretary. They persuaded me to go to headquarters for medical treatment, and to see them next evening at Bey Oglou Gazino (Pera bar room).

The next evening I went to Bey Oglou Gazino where I found this group, half drunk: Zia, Asi, Ali Beys, and five others. They invited me to drink and later explained that, on investigation, they had learned that in the struggle four had been wounded, and that the act was planned by Talaat Pasha, through one of his lovers, Fahriyeh Hanum, to kill me and throw my body secretly into the sea.

This Fahriyeh Hanum was also one of the tyrants who had acted to cut the main artery of the arm of Crown Prince Youssouf Izzeddin of Turkey.

Back in the barracks I spent hours composing a letter to my brothers in America in which I told them of the government's plan to root out and exterminate the Armenian population, if it could. I told them how futile my efforts had been to trace our family. I suggested that it seemed to me that unless the Allies forsook the Turkish front entirely I did not see how the Turks could hold out much longer. And I assured them that in my opinion the Allies would not do this

but would harass the Turks on all sides and squeeze them in, but never take Constantinople. I stated that I believed there would be panics in the foreign offices of England and France if such a thing happened. My suggestion was that they acquaint all Armenians in America with the true conditions of their countrymen in Turkey and that efforts be made to organize an Armenian Legion of volunteers to return and vindicate our people.

For one in my position it was a foolhardy letter to write, not only because it would result in my court-martial if it were found, but because there did not seem to be the remotest chance of getting it to my brothers.

The American Embassy offered my only hope. On my next holiday I went to Garabed's, changed my uniform for civilian attire and walked down to the Embassy. The hall was crowded with natives of the countries of the Allies, all apparently seeking the aid of the American embassy in the matter of relief for their people. I met an Armenian interpreter and outlined my wishes and told him of my military connections and of the loss of my people. He was deeply interested and sympathetic and promised that he would see that my letter got through to America without falling into Turkish hands.

CHAPTER IX

The Macedonian and Roumanian Fronts

All during the summer and fall, I worked hard and unceasingly in a cause which no longer held my loyalty. There seemed nothing else for me to do; it composed my mind. But I thought more and more of revenge, yet my thoughts wandered in a hopeless and vicious circle from which there seemed no escape. My only hope was in watching the steady weakening of the Central Powers and their allies. Perhaps the time would come when I could repay the Turks in the name of my murdered family, for I was convinced that they were dead; no news came from the War Office.

Turkey was suffering tremendous losses in man power and at the same time subject to heavy pressure from the Germans. In September, 1916, Turkey was obliged to send an army of 100,000 to the Balkans.

Germany was beginning seriously to feel the starvation diet inflicted by the Allied Blockade and was transporting foodstuff from the interior of Asia. Austria-Hungary was weakening and seeking help on the Galician front. Bulgaria was fighting valiantly enough along the Macedonian front but her losses were severe.

At this time the Twenty-first Army Corps, composed of three of the most powerful divisions of the Turkish Army, the Forty-sixth, Fiftieth, and Fifty-first Divisions, was recalled from the coast of Smyrna which they had successfully defended, and were brought back

to Constantinople for the purposes of being rehabilitated and sent to the aid of the Germans on the European fronts.

I received a new appointment and was made Assistant to the Commander of the Forty-sixth Artillery Regiment, Colonel Ali Riza Bey.

From conversation with officers of this regiment I learned that the commander of the Forty-sixth Division, Colonel Mahmoud Beligh Bey, frankly disapproved of the Union and Progress party, the party of the government, and belonged to the opposing faction, the majority of whose leaders had been murdered. I learned that Col. Mahmoud Beligh Bey had been spared the fate of his political friends because he was an authority on military science and had been an instructor of Enver and of Jemal Pasha in the Military Academy. I also was apprized of the fact that a Mustafa Shevket Bey of Smyrna, attached to the Colonel's staff, while on the surface a sympathizer of the Union and Progress Party was in reality quite opposed to it.

After a short stay in the rehabilitation camps for re-enforcements and new equipment for a protracted campaign our division was ordered to the region of Serez, a central point of the Macedonian front, extending a distance of seventy miles from the canal districts through the southern parts of Greece to the city of Monastir in Serbia.

On September 24th (1916) we reached our destination and joined forces with the Bulgarians who were being hard pressed by the enemy.

We had no more than established ourselves before

the British, French, and Greek contingents stationed less than seven miles away at Takinos-Loche opened a merciless attack upon our position. The siege lasted for six days, without interruption, from dawn to dusk and the artillery fire never ceased. There were periods during the day when the air was heavy with the blue smoke of battle and our view completely obstructed for miles. It was the most frightful of the land battles in which I had participated to that date. I saw whole trees uprooted and thrown into the air and hillsides denuded and pockmarked by bursting shells. Our artillery was stationed in the Greek village of Sarmisakli and there were times when I was sure that the British had found our range. I think that the dummy canon which I had made of stovepipe and placed well forward of our position confused the British airmen who directed their artillery fire. I not only was proud that my simple camouflage (which I must confess seemed a little childish at the time I used it), was successful, but I was grateful as well. The Turkish and Bulgarian infantry seemed to be on the verge of being wiped out whereas only ten percent of the artillery regiment was lost when the siege ended.

Three weeks of anxious quiet followed.

On October 15, 1916, a message was received from the Bulgarian coast guards, stationed at Kavala, stating that they needed Turkish re-enforcements to ward off an expected attack by the British and French who, they had reason to believe, soon would attempt to land forces at that point.

I was summoned to general headquarters in the city of Drama, twenty-seven miles east of our position and

was immediately escorted to the presence of Brigadier General Abdul Kerim Pasha.

He was a very frank and jolly man, though a supporter of the government.

"So," he said, "you are Captain Torossian, the crazy giaour who fooled the English with stove pipe guns. Well, Captain, you seem to have the full confidence of the War Office and I am going to appoint you as my representative to investigate the Bulgarian situation at Kavala. I think that since you are an Armenian and a Christian, you are more likely to have our new allies' confidence and thus to obtain a more true picture of affairs. We are in no position to send our men unless there is real need for them. Get all the information you can and don't fail to note the Bulgarian attitude and how they are conducting themselves."

The assignment interested me and I was glad of orders to start at once. At the station of Sari-Shaban I was met by the Bulgarian commander of a cavalry regiment and a mounted escort. I quickly reached headquarters where the fact that I was an Armenian seemed to please and surprise them. Before the evening was over a strong intimacy sprang up between us.

I spent three days inspecting the Bulgarian positions in Kavala and it was my opinion that the coast line was fairly well protected and that the Bulgarians required no help until the enemy actually attempted to land. The Bulgarian force was adequate to hold the coast defenses for twelve or fifteen hours and by that time sufficent Turkish re-enforcements could be brought up.

I wired my finding to General Kerim Pasha and awaited instructions. They were not received for a week during which I was hospitably entertained by my new Bulgarian friends.

On the morning of November 8, 1916, I received a telegram to report to general headquarters at Drama and set out in a cold, drizzling rain.

The Brigadier General seemed to have complete confidence in me and was more than pleasant.

After I had submitted my official report he asked me how I found things and seemed considerably amused when I told him how royally the Bulgarian officers were living in the homes of the Greeks and enjoying themselves by indulging heavily in the large stores of wines and koniakes which they had captured.

His silence seemed to indicate that the interview was at an end and I arose, but he waved me back.

"Be seated, Captain," he said, "there is another matter of importance in which I think you can serve us."

He studied a large file of papers which he had before him and then told me that within a few days a mission of German, Austrian, and Bulgarian officers would arrive at headquarters to consult upon the situation at the monastir front.

"From here," he informed me, "they will leave almost immediately for that front on a tour of inspection and I wish you to accompany them and report your findings promptly. In the meantime you will be my guest and feel yourself free to enjoy the hospitality of the camp."

So, I mused to myself, after all there is some honor in being an Armenian in Turkey, the honor of being

useful and the dishonor of having my parents murdered. Perhaps there is something oriental about us of the near east, for while I was stubbornly resolved to avenge my family I knew the value of infinite patience.

By the end of the week we were in a special train enroute to Monastir. It was the most uncomfortable train ride of my life: twice French and British planes tried to bomb both the train and the tracks. I was glad when we reached our destination and so were the officers whom I accompanied. Nine hours of contingent oblivion on wheels made us appreciate the discomforts of the battle fronts where at least one could be active.

The situation which we found roughly was like this:

On the enemy side a strong force of French, British, Greek, Italian, and Serbian soldiers whose main objective was to obtain control of the railway.

Opposed to them was an army composed of Germans, Austrians, and Bulgarians who were protecting the line, but at a great sacrifice of men.

After our inspection, the German commander indicated to us that in his opinion a heavy attack should be launched at once against the enemy stronghold at Monastir, in order to drive the Allied forces as far as Salonik and thus capture their immense stores of provisions.

For three days the matter was debated upon.

I personally argued that the enemy could be attacked to better advantage from the center of the line rather than on the right flank.

Before any definite decision was reached, however,

Commander Torossian when in charge of six thousand Arabian horsemen with Allied army in Damascus.

a wire came from general headquarters advising that plans for the attack be abandoned for the present and to await further instructions.

At the expiration of two days, our mission received a special dispatch in which we were instructed to leave at once for the Roumanian frontier.

On the morning of November 19, 1916, we set out for the town of Turtukai, on the Danube, and reached there late in the afternoon.

We found a large force of Germans under the command of Marshall von Mackensin. A plan was well under way for a general attack along the fifteen-mile front. Hundreds of German and Austrian soldiers poured in every hour during the next few days.

Two of the strongest Turkish divisions, the 50th and part of the 51st, were assigned to Slata along this front and I was charged with the command of the 51st Artillery Battalion and held a position directly back of the center of the line.

On November 28, 1916, at 3:30 a. m. the attack was launched with concerted artillery fire which continued unabated for thirty minutes.

In the raven darkness, the burst of flames from the cannons seemed like the sudden flashes of a vivid electrical display, like the countless switching on and off of signal lights; bursting shells seemed to shoot through the air like falling stars. We could hear the waters of the Danube in a sudden turmoil from the impact of the shrapnel.

On three pontoon bridges, constructed during the night, our armies started to cross to the Roumanian side.

By 4:30 the Roumanian bank of the river was ablaze for miles as the enemy destroyed their ammunition storage depots in order that we might not possess them. The heat of the flames was so intense that it baked our faces as we crossed the river.

The Roumanian line was quickly broken by our machine fire and was steadily forced back.

At 5:00 a. m. our artillery regiments started to cross the river. My battalion was first and protected our advancing cavalry from the enemy batteries.

The battle, fought bitterly and furiously, continued for two days and two nights. Our advance continued and hundreds of Roumanian cavalry and infantry were captured and made prisoners. At last we reached the main highway to the capitol and our advance was contested more stubbornly than ever. Powerful batteries guarded the entrance to Bucharest for a distance of probably eight miles and they kept up a steady fire.

Our position would be too perilous should we continue down the main pass, so, while the advance guards of the contending armies were staging hand to hand conflicts down the village, I ordered men to take positions back of the surrounding hills, placing our batteries in positions 200 yards apart. Within half an hour we were ready to commence firing; I had surveyed their strongholds and laid my plans.

The enemy, however, also had been busy and had discovered our position and started a violent bombardment.

Because of the unexpectedness and suddenness of the attack in the thick haze of smoke, it was impossible to determine distance and I was obliged to send

some of my men in search of enemy shrapnel caps. My reading of them indicated that they were fired from a distance of 5500 meters.

We returned the fire and within twelve minutes had silenced them to an occasional whimper from their smaller guns.

Their mountain artillery now located us and began firing, but not very effectively. Before determining the direction of our next attack, I determined to try to obtain a better view and estimate of our surroundings, and so took my steroscope and climbed the hillside. I suppose I had advanced 50 yards, when a shrapnel fragment grazed my head and, while I did not lose consciousness, I collapsed to the ground in what I felt was a very nondescript head. It hurt like the devil and the wound bled so freely that blood covered the breast of my uniform and blinded my eyes. I began wondering if it would be possible to bleed to death and still remain conscious to the last drop, when Red Cross soldiers were by my side cleaning and dressing the wound.

They helped me to my feet and I suppose that I staggered a bit because the loss of the blood had weakened me. I was too professionally interested in the battle to pay a great deal of attention to my wound, so I ordered my batteries to play on the open fields, while I again tried to survey the situation. I found the armies in such close combat that it was practically impossible to distinguish the enemy from our own forces. I countermanded my order and instead ordered a rapid advance in the direction of the open valley.

I rode in advance of our battery with my staff and after we had gone a distance of perhaps three miles at the turn of the road we met three couriers galloping toward our battery, with a message that the Roumanians were receiving re-enforcements and with instruction to try to stop them.

I rushed my battery back to a low cliff overlooking the valley and from there I observed an endless parade of Roumanian cavalry filing down the main highway in an attempt to block the further progress of our armies.

We opened fire at once and under cover of our guns the Germans dashed madly forward to disperse them. In an instant the valley was a maelstrom of milling men and mad horses and an inferno of shrieks and whining. I could see hundreds of horses galloping to the hills riderless, or with wounded or dead men hanging from the stirrups.

Before the sun had fallen, the enemy was in retreat and the Germans, Bulgarians, and Austrian cavalry marched victoriously into Bucharest; this was on December 5, 1916.

Our Turkish artillery battalion was assigned to a small village about six miles outside the city and here we called roll and I found that I had lost but twenty-eight men.

The following afternoon we were ordered to enter the city where we were installed in the luxury and comfort of the Palace Hotel.

German officials commented favorably upon the assistance our battalion had rendered, reported to headquarters that under my direction twenty-five enemy

canons had been silenced and cited me for exceptional bravery in carrying on in the face of a powerful enemy.

For my seeming act of heroism, for acting no more heroically than countless private soldiers did, day after day, on every front, under more trying circumstances, I was waited upon by a delegation of German, Austrian, and Bulgarian officials who lauded me eloquently and decorated me with ??

CHAPTER X

An Unexpected Meeting and a Secret Conference

Since there was no further need of strong forces in Roumania, the 51st Turkish Division was ordered to return to Constantinople.

The Turkish War Office had become much concerned over the eastern battle fronts and the strongest Turkish divisions not in active service were being recalled to be rehabilitated for service on these frontiers.

I was temporarily attached to the 51st Division and the artillery battalion which I commanded was the first to leave. On our return journey I became restless and wandered through the train and struck up a casual acquaintance with a tall, nobly proportioned Arab whose strong bronzed features somehow attracted my attention. We exchanged commonplaces and he introduced himself as Major Nuri-Bey, a staff officer of a Turkish division belonging to the Fourteenth Army Corps. He told me that he had but shortly left the Galician front and in compliance with orders from Constantinople was enroute to the Palestine.

The seeming heaviness of his speech puzzled me. I was sure that behind his keen eyes and fine features was a mind which did not labor for expression. I seemed to sense that something was distressing him mentally so I offered him a cigarette and arose to

leave, when his expressive hands suddenly motioned me to stay.

"If you have nothing more important requiring you, Captain, won't you tarry awhile?"

I assured him that it would be a pleasure. We lighted our cigarettes and settled back comfortably.

His next remark was unexpected.

"May I inquire, arkadash (comrade), where you were born?"

I told him that I was of Armenian origin and born in Everek.

At my answer, he looked at me quite closely and I felt somewhat suspicious.

His next query was more surprising and I felt a shade too indifferently.

"Then perhaps you have heard of or seen a Captain Torossian, a countryman of yours who seems to have established himself as somewhat of a hero."

I was not quite sure as to just where our conversation was drifting, or precisely who this splendid looking Arab might be, so I exercised my very limited talents at facetiousness and remarked that I had seen the man that very morning while I was shaving.

When the significance of my words dawned on him, he took my hand in a friendly grasp and his whole face lit up and a smile danced in his jet black eyes.

"Ajaibe?" (Can it be?) he asked. "How strange that we two should meet, and at a time when," he hesitated as though lost for words. "Captain," he continued, "I have heard about you and saw a picture of you in the palace of a certain Arab Pasha, a friend of mine. He praised your heroism and proudly considers

you as a son. He told me that your parents are living. Is that true?"

I was puzzled. Did the man really know Muharrem's father? From the emphasis which he had placed upon his question concerning my parents I felt that there was one thing which he did know, and that was about the Armenian massacres. Still not sure of my ground I decided to accept my estimate of his sincerity and accept him as a friend and not as the spy he well might be. I expressed the sincere pleasure I felt at meeting one who had not so long since seen the Pasha.

Finally I related to him the story of my family. I told him of the deportation which I knew had occurred and of the living doubt which had existed for months and my fears that they had been insulted and tortured beyond endurance, but then I was careful to omit any suggestion of malice on my part toward the Turkish rulers. I still was not sure.

Evidently he was less cautious than I, although I think that it was simply because he was a keener judge of character. From him I learned that his real name was Nuri Yousuf, of an Arab noble family, whose power was feared and most of whom had been captured and hung. Only four weeks before his cousin had been publicly executed in the city square of Damascus.

We talked for hours and since we were alone in the compartments, he made no attempt to conceal his bitterness against the Turks, as he described injustice after injustice and humiliation after humiliation to which his countrymen had been subjected.

"So, Captain," he said, "you see that we have some-

Captain Torossian's Forces (Arabs, Tribes and Bedouins) smash 7th and 8th Turkish Armies on Jordan River at Endamen Bridge.

thing in common, you the Armenian and I the Arab; our people have something in common. I have waited and intrigued a long time for this bejaish (transfer) to the Palestine. At my first opportunity I shall desert and gather an army of my people and I shall entekam (aveng), Captain, very swiftly I hope. The Turkish yoke does not fit well on Arab shoulders and esyann (revolt) already is in the minds and hearts of my people."

Before we parted he extracted a promise that I spend one night with him at his home in Sori-Yaar, a suburb on the Bosphorus. I did and I remember the night for its hospitality and the hope it somehow kindled that there were new adventures someplace ahead, adventures which would lead me too into the paths of open revolt. Perhaps I too would find revenge upon desert sands. It was a tingling night, full of promise of a day when dark, brigandish looking men of high courage would follow me into an unknown arena. That night I dreamed of plot and counterplot, of secret missions, of conspiracies and the baneful shadows of spying enemies; of the hint of hidden events and the secret significances of words, of smiles, of gestures.

Back in Constantinople, I immediately turned over my men and equipment to headquarters and arranged to reunite with my former artillery regiment in the Forty-sixth Division which had arrived for rehabilitating only a week previous.

The ensuing several months were spent in the usual routine work of refilling the ranks and equipment. Orders had been received for an expedition along the Mesopotamia frontiers.

On May 17, 1917, we left on the first half of our journey which was to bring us to the terminus of Katma in northern Syria.

At every stopping point along the railway route, I left the train and employed the time seeking and questioning Armenian refugees whom I began to notice as we progressed toward the interior. I was determined to know positively of the fate of my parents. My efforts were without success.

At last after weary hours the trains struggled into the sun-baked village of Katma. Here was established a general encampment for all divisions which were awaiting their turn to be sent to various points in the interior. Our division was temporarily installed with them.

While we remained in the encampment, I employed every possible occasion in reaching the surrounding districts for Armenian refugees and possible news of any who had come from Everek. My first clew I found on the streets of Katma from a ragged old woman whom I met tottering along selling small loaves of bread. She proved to be an Armenian and told me that she heard that refugees from the region of Everek were in the city of Aleppo, twenty miles south of Katma.

Since I was on leave I immediately set out for Aleppo which seemed to be a place of famished looking, barefooted urchins; not one of whom could have been much over ten and every single one of whom from the tiniest to the largest, carried strapped over his narrow shoulders, the most dilapidated shoe shine outfits anyone could imagine.

I tried to speak with them in Armenian but they would hurry away from me, their big eyes full of fear, as they stared at my uniform; they would insist that they were Moslems. Finally I did win the confidence of one and from him I learned that his family had been deported only two months before. I shall never forget the expression in his eyes, the fear and the hatred, when he told how his older brothers and father had been murdered on the road to exile, leaving his mother and him to trudge on alone in the ever thinning line.

I asked him if he knew of any boys from Everek and for answer he turned and whistled shrilly.

A boy of twelve years came up to us and looked at me very sharply as I spoke in his native tongue. He seemed a brave lad though, and not as shy as the other boy, but when I inquired if his family came from Everek, he began crying. After that, all I could get was a confused murmur through his sobbing in which he tried to tell how happy he had been in Everek and that now only he and his mother were alive, and that she worked in a nearby army garment factory for ten cents a day. I felt like a beast cross examining, coaxing, bothering the child as I did.

Finally after much cajoling and liberal fee he agreed to accompany me to the factory where his mother was employed.

In half an hour it was over and I was leaving more disappointed than had I never gone. I had met the women of Everek and had spoken with them but of the fate of my parents they could not tell me a word.

CHAPTER XI

The Mesopotamian Front

Within another week our division received orders to continue on to Mosul. Endless hour after hour we traveled in railway coaches, stifling from the torrid heat, until we reached Tell-Halif, the end of the railway line beyond which the land stretched in arid monotony.

From Tell-halif we set out upon our twelve day march to the banks of the Tigris where lies Mosul, (Ninveh).

The roads were rough and filled with jagged rocks and the march was slow and dreary, over a land that alternated between desert and malarial marsh. The sun was merciless, so much so that traveling by day became impossible. We would squirm for shelter in the thick marshes and try to sleep until the sun went down; then the long stumbling march until dawn. Water was so scarce that often we had to dig pools in the marshes and boil the muddy germ infested scum to drink. Mosquitoes would descend upon us in hordes. Malaria and typhus broke out and hundreds died. But still the march on and on, night after night. Once we ran into a storm of locusts and battled them continuously for two days. Millions upon millions of white wings filled the air like opaque snow and hid the sun. At one point we came upon gangs of working men constructing a railway line under German supervision.

Most of them were Armenian refugees, nor were they a happy lot. They toiled like slaves, their backs blistering in the sun.

The last march was by day, and on June 9, 1917, an army of spectres with staring eyes and blackened lips made a pretense at marching as they filed into Mosul.

General Khalil Pasha, Commander of the Mesopotamian front, stood on a nearby hill to inspect our batteries. We did not present a hopeful sight with many of the men still weak from the effects of disease; bedraggled re-enforcements we were.

Later conditions grew worse; typus and cholera and malaria attacked new victims until the regular hospitals were taxed beyond capacity and field hospitals were set up. More than a score died daily.

The Turkish government was in a most discouraging position: the demands for men along the different fronts were greater than could be supplied and a serious lack of provisions in the interior was causing alarm.

In the region of Mosul, on the Tigris, there were a number of Arab tribes living in the plains and in the mountains, each tribe independent of the other and maintaining their own codes of conduct, their own customs. None of them showed strict allegiance to the Turkish government, and all lived entirely within their own communities, setting up their own courts, establishing their own laws and selecting their own judge and chief tribesmen as they saw fit. Each tribe was distinguished from the neighboring tribes by a slight difference in dress with a tattoo mark on the right cheek in deep blue ink, designating the clan to which

the tribe members belonged. They lived and thrived and labored industriously on their farms and vineyards and tended their herds, raising great quantities of foodstuffs and cattle and producing fine wool from their sheep.

Continual feuds raged between them and not only was their collective temper inconstant but their attitude toward strangers varied from tribe to tribe. As a rule they were hospitable to guests but some were known to spread a banquet for their guests and then, after they had repasted heavily and were asleep, attack and murder them. There was one tribe which would never harm any wayfarer with whom it had broken bread and permitted within the tribal precincts. One tribe of which we heard carried courtesy to the finest nicety and sped the departing travelers with every flourish only to madly dash after them after they had gone a few miles, shouting, riding wild and killing without notice or pity.

To a civilized American or European all this must seem fantastically unreal, cinematic in fact, yet I have seen these tribesmen rush through the night, white riders with flashing swords, rash in dealing death and careless of it.

Two weeks previous to our arrival in Mosul the General Commander, Khalil Pasha, having experienced resistance to his food levys on the part of the larger tribes, had sent fifteen hundred Turkish soldiers to solicit foodstuff or forage if necessary. They never returned, and the severed heads of officers were sent back in sacks as their answer.

War, in these days, is more refined and not nearly

so horsey and noisy. Gases invidious and lethal creep over vast areas and burn out lives in an agony of pain. Bombs drop in place of stars, and epidemics are started. War, today, is much more impersonal but I am not sure that it is any more courageous.

During early July the food scarcity became acute and it was determined that immediate measures would have to be taken to secure aid from several of the larger tribes whose characteristics, while not generally reliable, were such as to give some hope of success. The expedition was not to be punitive but solicitory. The Turks could not afford the overt enmity of the Arabs; nor could they afford any longer to wait for food.

Colonel Salih Bey with whom I had become closely acquainted was appointed to command the expedition and it was decided that Sheik Mousa of the Yezido Tribe offered our greatest hope. I was requested to accompany the expedition with my battery and help protect our lines if necessary.

Salih Bey and I talked the matter over for many hours; we both spoke Arabic and felt that by fortitude and careful command we could accomplish our mission without bloodshed. Every man in the expedition was cautioned as to his conduct and ordered to be extremely careful not to give offense, especially in the presence of the Arab women.

On the morning of July 21, 1917, we set off down the valley; a force of one thousand infantry, one hundred cavalry and my artillery batteries.

After marching for nearly fifteen hours we reached the settlement of Humeydad, the home of the Sham-

mars, one of the largest, most influential, and most friendly of the Arab tribes. Their tents stretched for miles along the hillsides and ended somewhere in the vicinity of Bagdad. They boasted of a cavalry of fifteen thousand men and possessed some of the finest horses and camels in the district.

Their chief, Hajdi Adil Bey, was a pleasant, kindly old Arab who gave us a pleasant welcome. He ordered food for our half famished and very tired expedition and insisted that Colonel and I, as ranking officers, dine at his own table.

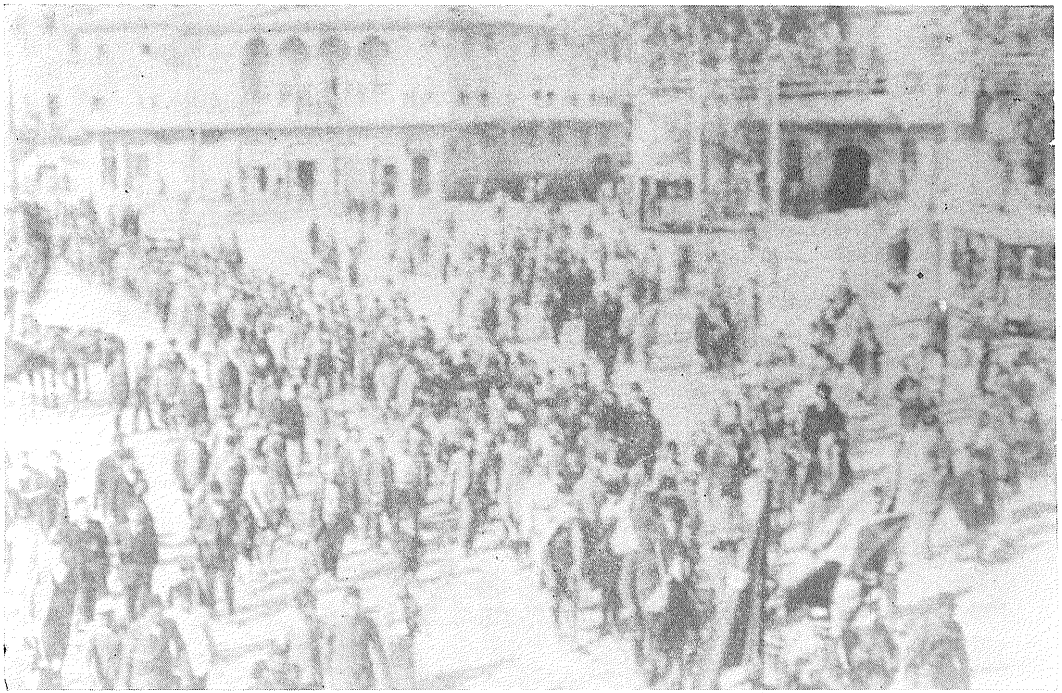
We bivouacked among them for the night after posting a double watch of sentries. On the following morning the old Sheik assigned several of his cavalrymen as guides and they remained with us for five miles or more until we reached the frontiers of the Shammar domain.

We could not have advanced more than twenty miles from Humeydad, when we officers, who were riding in advance, pulled our horses up sharply and almost simultaneously. Out of nowhere a group of Arab horsemen had appeared and were galloping madly down the side of the Senjar Mountains.

Colonel Salih raised his binoculars. We all were excited. Commands cracked like whips down the line as we halted and tried to determine the next move.

My recommendation was that, since it would be unwise for the ranking officer to leave the expedition, and since I was the only other officer speaking Arabic, I be permitted to ride out and meet them as a gesture of friendliness.

I instructed two orderlies to follow me and we raced



Captain Torossian with eight hundred volunteers enroute from Damascus to Beirut.

ahead, directly in the path of the riders. The sheik who rode ahead drew his horse to an abrupt halt before me and his bronzed face was flushed in anger as he shouted at me demanding the meaning of a procession of men and cannon through his domains. He was so excited that he swayed as he brandished an iron bar which he carried. He pointed out that if we came as enemies his forces could easily crush us and intimated that it would be a great joy to return the officers' heads to their commanders. I think that he promised to do them up nicely in gunny sacks. But, he said, if we came as friends his hospitality was ours.

I believe that he was capable of fulfilling either of the alternatives, felt that he was at least half a liar both ways and knew that, if I wanted to retain my personal head, I would have to dissimulate as well. Then he told me that he was Sheik Mousa, the very one whom we were seeking.

In a moment I leaped from my horse and hastened to his side and took his hand and shook it as wildly as he had spoken. I bowed, I saluted him and then with all the fluency within my power I impressed him that we came as friends who had heard of his hospitality and friendliness, that we came in peace and that having heard of his prowess and nobility as a warrior he should receive us with at least the perspicacity not to approach in the guise of an enemy.

Flattery triumphed, for after further conversation in which Colonel Salih now joined, he directed his men to fall back and lead our men to a camping place. A quiet word, however, was passed down the lines that each man be on the alert.

They led us into paradise, literally and traditionally, for Sheik Mousa held sway over domains that antiquarians say once was the Garden of Eden. It was a land of the breath of beauty. The plains were an endless stretch of carpet of soft green grass. The branches of the fruit trees brooded over the burden of their lusciousness. The odor of blossoms and the tang of ripeness filled the air. The gardens which interspersed the plains were like painted pictures of gorgeously tinted flowers, set against the sky. The birds were flashes of color, red and blue, and yellow, or strutting brilliant against the monotony of the grass. There was no longer war, or sorrow, no longer intrigue and massacre and suffering. Life had become breathlessness of beauty.

We encamped in a valley by the side of a stream that forever babbled like women over tea. Our men were treated royally. Hundreds of tribesmen came to our camp at one time or another with fruit and hundreds of bags of ripened corn and honey and bread and meat. We ate as we had never eaten before; we literally gorged.

A week passed but still no effort was made to broach the real purpose of our visit. Colonel Salih, while not inappreciative of the treatment which we were receiving, was inclined to be more or less suspicious of the Sheik's intentions and was tactfully avoiding the subject of provisions.

From the beginning I had felt that it might devolve upon me to divulge the real purpose of our visit and so I had extended myself to ingratiate Sheik Mousa, to win his esteem and his confidence. We became good

friends and spent many hours discussing the war. But still no favorable opening seemed to present itself, and I became convinced that our only hope of success lay in the concocting of some scheme whereby we might be able to render our host some special favor which would call forth, I knew, a liberal expression of his gratitude. I was equally convinced that, if we made one false move, placing us in the light of either beggars or thieves, there was little hope for us. Obviously we could not remain there forever, modern Adams in warlike array, and certainly we could not return empty-handed.

It had been so long since I had considered myself a lucky man that the unexpectedness of my good fortune, one day, in conversing with the Sheik, left me speechless. I no longer recall how the subject came, but, suddenly, I was facing again the dark browed, flushed face of the man who had swayed in the saddle and remarked upon the precarious position of my head. Sheik Mousa was in a great fury and was talking about one Ibrahim Pasha, former leader of a neighboring tribe of Kurds, which evidently had grown to the proportions of a very large thorn in the side of Sheik Mousa's community through acts of thieving and cattle stealing on a large scale. It appeared that the Kurds were a special torment and annoyance, never fighting in the open, constantly raiding isolated pastures and tormenting his people.

Fortunately Colonel Salih was not present because I doubt if he would have given favorable consideration to a plan which immediately formed in my mind. Without discussing the matter with Colonel Salih I sug-

gested to the sheik that I should like to accompany him with my battery on a punitive expedition against such neighbors convincing them once and for all that they could not so cowardly invade his lands with impunity. I explained that the Colonel might be adverse to my plan, unless we could show a more valid reason than simply my idea. It, therefore, was arranged that early the following morning Sheik Mousa should confront Colonel Salih and myself with the news that the tribes of Ibrahim Pasha were lying in wait to ambush us at the foot of the mountains.

Sheik Mousa, grand actor that he was, carried out his part so well that I became excited myself. As prearranged, I suggested to Colonel Salih that the Sheik should raise an army at once and that I should accompany them with my battery.

Within three days Sheik Mousa, with a force of five hundred cavalry and two thousand infantry, supported by my battery, was well on his way to the Kurd stronghold of Jebel Abdul Aziz.

The Kurds were caught unawares and their hard riding, slashing stubborn resistance swiftly was put to rout and we marched through their villages. In the eyes of Sheik Mousa a great victory had been won and he gloated over the booty of foodstuffs and cattle and valuables. He was so elated over the assistance my battery had rendered that he insisted that I accept one of the finest of his fine stable of thoroughbred Arabian horses. I wondered when I accepted it how he would react when he learned how very much more we wanted.

When we returned to camp, there seemed no stopping the profuse expressions of his gratitude, and in

view of his added insistence that he must show his appreciation in some more tangible way than words we felt that the psychological moment had arrived. As diplomatically as possible we explained the great need of our army.

He jumped to his feet, the excitable, fiery fellow he was, and I felt my head already rolling uncomfortably far from my body. He blew shrilly on the queer shaped horn which all Arab leaders carry, and the blast brought his attendants running. In the space of no time, he gave directions that seemed fabulous.

On the following day our own expedition began the return to our general encampment, escorting a caravan of over five hundred camels loaded with enormous quantities of foodstuffs and over a thousand beefs on hoof.

Our return to headquarters was a signal for great rejoicing. On the third evening of our return, a formal banquet was arranged. During the course, one of our staff, Mustafa Shevkit, talking in the glow of too much wine arose and proposed a toast.

"General Commander," he said, raising his glass, "brother officers, I give you the giaour, Captain Torossian, the Armenian hero of the Turks. He is the son of a giaour and does not believe in Mohammed, yet in line of duty, he is as loyal and faithful and devout as the great saint himself."

For the first time that night I began wondering about this loyalty for which I had been "toasted". Certainly I felt no sense of loyalty while a positive feeling of bitterness was growing within me. As I look back now, I suppose that I was (and I hope this does not sound

egotistical) too good a soldier not to want to carry off my professional duties well. I shall put it this way: I had been trained so well as a military man that I had no better sense. I had no alternative, in fact, because there was no way of leaving the country, no rebels to lead, no cabals to join.

All remained quiet in Mosul until early October, 1917, when disquieting reports came into headquarters that the Russians were making a serious and threatening advance through the eastern part of the Empire, and that the English were steadily gaining ground and had occupied the city of Tikrit, situated on the banks of the Tigris, about halfway between Bagdad and Mosul.

On October 10, 1917, the 46th Division was ordered to the front and after an eight-day march took position near the town of Fettah Gorge, fifteen miles outside Tikrit. The position was excellent as a natural stronghold; the Tigris ran through the gorge and the banks were protected by the Jebel Hamrin mountain.

The day after our arrival, I had my batteries and four hundred men on the breast of the mountain and awaited orders.

On the third day, British airplanes discovered our position and a fierce bombing began. I ordered the construction of dummy cannons from stove pipe and had them placed at points of easy visibility to the enemy hoping to ease our position. By that time, however, the enemy artillery found our range and began shelling us.

The situation was becoming critical when their artillery ceased firing, assuming, I suppose, that our silence

indicated that we were retreating. A company of Hindoo soldiers deployed in double quick time and came dodging up the side of the mountain seeking the shelter of rocks and trees. Our machine gun nests opened fire but before we could inflict any serious damage the Hindoos retreated in frightened disorder.

The next day British airplanes flew over our position and again bombed us. During the bombardment I was again wounded; this time on the hand, one of those irritating wounds that make it necessary to report to the field hospital each day to have it dressed.

For three weeks the fighting continued on both sides of the river with my batteries finally getting into action. The most momentous battle took place on November twentieth and in it the Turks sustained severe losses.

Finally, however, the English were checkmated, at least hostilities ceased for the time being, and we were glad for the rest.

The sudden quiet along our section of the Tigris aroused suspicions which were quickly confirmed. The enemy had tried to draw heavy Turkish contingents to the region of Fettah Gorge while they began a strong advance by way of Palestine to capture Jerusalem and Damascus.

As an ex-military man, relating battle front experiences, I suppose that I should remember more relevant incidents in the battle of Fettah Gorge than pigs, just pigs, but in all truthfulness I do not, or at least all other incidents are subordinated to the memory of pigs, wild pigs, a whole herd of them.

First may I digress? I do not remember whether or not this is the third or thirteenth time but digress

I must if the incident I am to relate is to have any significance.

Turks do not like pigs; the feeling I believe is not personal but religious which makes the dislike considerably more intense. As to whether or not the pigs like Turks I do not know; nor do I believe there is any authority on the subject. At any rate so far as a Mohammedan Turk is considered, the pig is an unclean animal; his religion says so and I am too poor a scholar either to affirm or deny the assertion.

There are scandals, however, in the best of religions, as well as back fence gossip, and Christians, I suppose, first circulated the scandal that Mohammedanism loathed pigs not because they were supposedly unclean but because a couple of wild young boars played a scurvy trick on Mohammed back in the old days when he was just trying to get started.

Thus my digression and now about the night of the pigs at Fettah Gorge. And all of this happened by the way during the days of the enemy attacks upon our positions.

Herds of wild boars infested the vicinity of Fettas Gorge and generally made the faithful an unhappy people.

And then along came our regimental Hoja or chaplain and remained with us at our position during the attacks. Daily, this devout man prayed that the great Allah would keep the obnoxious wild boars of Fettah Gorge out of our path. But something went wrong, either the good Hoja was not leading the right kind of life or the artillery fire of the day had deafened Allah, for one night at about 10:30, after we all had

Captain Torossian's brother, Sergeant Parsegh Torossian. He fought bravely in Palestine and the Cilician front. He was decorated by England and France.

sought welcome rest in our field tents near the entrance to an old cave, we were awakened by the heavy pound of hoofs. There was no time to think or plan what to do; the boars trampled wildly into camp, ripping tents, tearing headlong into tents and trees.

I reached for my pistol and shouted orders but the Turks were as pell mell as the boars. Every place I looked I saw a Turk trying to hide himself from the sight of the animals; fanatically religious, they were driven half mad by the visitation that was upon them. The Hoja I found shinning a tent pole and calling to Allah to preserve his life.

The boars finally were driven off but for several hours after there was no sleep as the Hoja intoned in prayer against the return of the boars, the unspeakable and vile. He ordered his tent transferred to a rocky cliff and insisted that all his effects be washed and disinfected that very night. The last I saw of him he was hopping about on his toes up the hillside fearful that he might step in the footprints of the beasts.

As you would say colloquially, what a night! It is my most vivid memory of the battle of Fettah Gorge.

CHAPTER XII

I Meet My Sister in the Desert

The Forty-sixth Division was ordered to return to army headquarters at Mosul and thence proceed to the Palestine front. We left Fettah Gorge on December 9, 1917.

The return to Mosul did not worry us but there was not an officer or man who did not dread repeating that march from Mosul back to Tel-ul-Halif. Fortunately, the weather was cooler, and the suffering from disease and heat was comparatively mild. We made faster progress, now that we were veterans of that desert march.

When we arrived at Tel-ul-Halif, we found the place a confusion of inpouring troops awaiting their turn to be transported to various fronts. The railway yards were blocked for miles with trains of military supplies and provisions. The detention camps were crowded and overflowing. From the appearance of things it looked as though our division would be detained for a month or more before it could be transported to the Palestines.

My batteries were stationed in a small Kurd village five or six miles from divisional headquarters, a quiet, restful place.

The Christian Christmas holiday approached and my heart was heavy from so many things: the absence of Jemileh, the death of Muharrem, the disappearance

of my parents and sister, the loss of my friends. The world would have been an intolerably lonesome place that Christmas had not the Turkish commander given leave to three Armenian doctors to spend the holiday with me. Each of us had his own sad story to tell, each of us had indelibly imprinted in his mind the haggard, sorrowing faces of his refugee countrymen.

During the course of our conversation, one of the doctors remarked that he had overheard one Turkish officer tell another that several hundred Armenian refugees were living in a camp on the hillside west of Tel-ul-Halif while they worked on the railway line.

I suggested that there was nothing better for us to do than to order our horses and ride over. I suppose that deep in my heart there was still the hope that I might find my parents.

It was early afternoon on a day, bright as gold and cool as spring. We put our horses to a leisurely pace and at intervals stopped to survey the hills through binoculars. Finally we made out a lone grey streak in the distance and headed for it until we could see the outlines of a long row of tents.

The warm sun was ready to surrender to twilight, a melancholy hour, when we dismounted by a rough, stony path and made our way single file up the steep incline to the rear entrance of the camp. A guard directed us to the women's quarters which were in several log cabins to the rear of the tents.

I knocked at the door of the largest of the cabins. There was the grating of a heavy latch and the door opened slightly. An old woman whose wrinkled face seemed cast in perpetual fear peered at us.

"Merry Christmas," I greeted her in Armenian.

Never before had I seen such a transformation; her wrinkled parchment face seemed suddenly younger, although, I suppose, that was the illusion created by the bright lustre that came to her tired, faded, fear haunted eyes.

"Merry Christmas," she answered me tremulously. "And whom do you seek?"

I reassured her concerning my uniform and told her that I sought women from Everek.

"My son," she told me, "we have here several women from Malatia, from Sivas, from Caesarea, from Marsovan, but only one from Everek, a very young girl. Shall I call her?"

I was trained as a military man and reared amidst Turkish customs and even to this day I do not easily show my emotions, but as I implored her to hurry, I began perspiring and my teeth chattered. Perhaps it was the impossible strain of months.

The next thing of which I was fully aware was a slender, brown-haired, blue-eyed girl standing before me, blushing and shy and fearful before our uniforms. I dared not trust my senses, for in her eyes I saw the expression of my mother. It was unbelievable that she could be my sister, the baby sister whom last I had seen when she was only eight years old. But there she stood before me in ragged peasant garb, a young girl with the eyes of my mother.

"Will you tell me your name?" I finally managed to ask in semblance of even tone.

"Baizer Torossian," she half whispered, her voice

soft and timid, "and once I lived on Tekisheh street in Everek."

She was my sister, yet for some unknown reason I went on questioning.

"Are the rest of your family with you?" I asked, knowing the cruelty of my question.

"My father and mother are dead. I have three brothers in America and another who was an officer in the Turkish army, but he was killed in the battle of the Dardanelles. I am alone," she said.

I think, before any of us realized just what was happening, she was in my arms and crying as though her heart would break.

"I am your brother," was all I was able to say. I kept repeating the phrase slowly and I think a little grimly. I was not calloused, yet the emotion I felt was not entirely engendered by brotherly love. I felt that I had snatched something from a government which slowly I was coming to hate.

I was barely conscious that she was struggling to free herself and that I had scared her terribly.

I released her and held her hands.

"Don't you realize, my darling girl, that I am your brother, the brother whom you thought killed? Baizar, you must not be afraid for I am your brother. You need never be afraid anymore, Baizar, for I have come to take you away."

My voice I tried to make infinitely tender, as I kept repeating that at last her troubles were over and that she was safe.

"Not a soul in all Turkey would dare touch the sister of Captain Torossian," I said boastfully.

Within an hour after my arrival at that camp in the hills, Baizar was riding cross saddle before me as my friends and I took the trail. Grief and joy were mingled in my heart as we rode back to the camp. There was great sorrow for the loss of my dear mother and father, and yet I was happy in finding my precious sister. The doctors left me at the outskirts of the village and returned to their posts. Baizar and I rode on to the house in which I was quartered and reached there not long before midnight.

She had by this time come to believe in me as I told her episodes of home which she remembered. In the light of my lodgings after I had my orderly make her comfortable, and the fear had left her eyes which were now excited and bright, she told me that very faintly she seemed to recollect my features.

We sat together and drank tea, oblivious of the time, as she told me the story of her wanderings. I set them down all too briefly perhaps, but as I remember her words.

"On November fifth," she began, "the Kaymakam of Everek sent a message to our home with news that you had been killed in the battle of the Dardanelles. Since we no longer had the protection of your name we were ordered to accept Mohammedanism at once and I was to be immediately given in marriage to a Mohammedan boy.

Father and mother had been resisting these demands for months and were worn out from visits to the City Hall imploring leniency and invoking your name as protection.

"Mother's health was broken down from worry and

father had been roughly treated. But still they fought him off and were not deported. Sometimes they would keep me in hiding in a neighbor's home for days at a time.

"On the day that he sent news that you were killed I was at home. Father and mother sent the messenger back with the negative answer they always had given and we prepared to flee. Father felt that we could leave that night, but within an hour an officer and three guards returned and we were obliged to accompany them. Three other guards joined us and we were marched through the streets to the open highway.

"Outside the city, father, panic-stricken now for our safety, approached one of the guards whom he had known by sight for several years and tried to find out what they were going to do to us and where they were taking us.

"He tried to be kind to us but all he could tell us was that we must travel for at least twelve days until we reached the city of Sis, where we were to be turned over to the governor of that place. It was a weary journey.

"Mother was so weakened by the strain that she collapsed when we reached there and we were allowed to rest for a few days before we were ordered on.

"New guards, only less kindly than the others. We continued and this time the destination was Islahieh, but our fate still unknown. The journey to Islahieh, though but a fraction of the road from Everek to Sis, was more difficult. The guards annoyed us and prodded us whenever they could and we were becoming

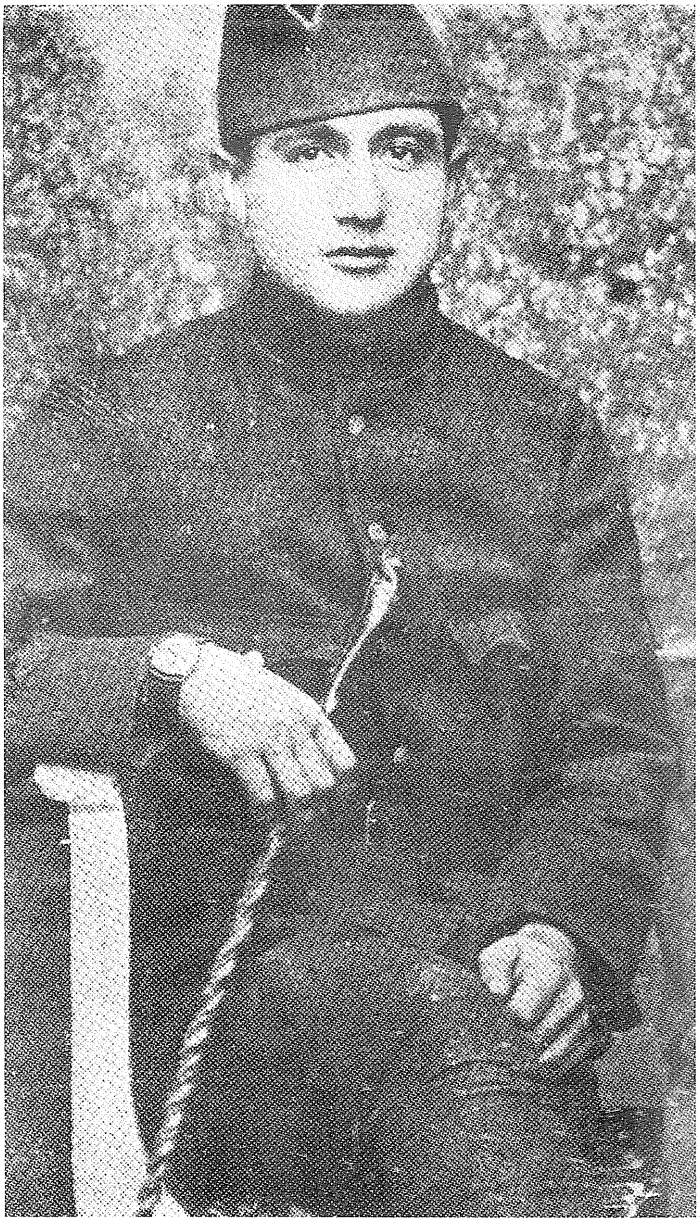
very tired. We were fed but twice a day and little then.

"In Islahieh we were led through the streets to a detention camp where they said nearly two thousand refugees were held to be deported. The confusion and the excitement took mother's little remaining strength and twice she fainted. She had become just a skeleton; we all had, although I seemed to fare best. We reached the detention camp in the morning and by noon we were dragging our weary steps in the sad procession of ragged, half-starved people, plodding on an open road to no one knew where.

"Five miles or so outside the city gates, we were suddenly ordered to wait. What happened then I do not know. I think that the long double lines of guards fell back. The next thing I knew was the roar of guns, maybe they were small cannons, or machine guns, or rifles, I do not know. The shrieks were terrible. Moans, blood guns, darts of flame, dead, wounded—I don't know. I never knew the world could be so cruel a place. Women, babies, little children, they seemed to fall like paper people pushed over by the wind.

"I did not really faint, because, as I fell among the bodies on the ground, I was conscious. I lay close to two dead people, at least I think they were dead then. I buried my face to the ground and then blood began to ooze along. I felt it creep along my cheek, toward my lips and I wanted to scream and run, but I was too frightened. I wondered if they would kill me next.

"I do not know how long the firing had ceased before I realized it. Twilight had become almost night.



Corporal Aram Torossian, brother of Captain Torossian, who came as a volunteer with his brother from the United States. He fought bravely in Palestine and the Cilician front. He was decorated by England and France.

It was a long time before I raised my head. There was not a soldier nor a light about. Now and then I would hear a moan of someone dying, I suppose. That the Turks would return to remove the bodies I knew. I wondered if there were any other as lucky as I had been and I became more bold. I called for father and mother. No one anywheres answered, no one moved. I found two water bottles and I tugged them from dead bodies, crying all the time. And then I began to run as fast as I could for the mountains. I ran and walked half the night until I reached them, and I never stopped crying. Alone in the woods I sobbed myself to sleep. And from that time until I saw you tonight I have never since cried.

"I wandered in those mountains for two weeks, too terror-stricken to know what to do. I ate berries and grass and anything. I never knew that anyone could be so hungry and yet live.

"One day, I heard shots. I was too desperate to want to hide, so I blindly started in the direction of them. After a while they ceased, but I kept on. Finally I was sure I heard someone moaning. I stood and listened, and then I saw a man not twenty feet from where I stood. His back was toward me and I could see that his arm was wounded and that it was bleeding profusely. He did not wear a soldier's uniform, so I went to him as fast as I could, tearing pieces of my clothing for bandage.

"When I approached, though he was very weak, I saw him reach for his rifle and try to turn and face me. By then I knew that he too was an Armenian and I called to him. I helped dress his wound as well as

I could and gave him water. He was weak from the loss of blood and we rested there till evening.

"He told me that he came from the Armenian mountain of Ravandouz and that he and a number of other young men had stolen arms and food and had come to these mountains to escape massacre. They had been pursued by the Turks, and many of them killed.

"He told me of a cave on the other side of the hill where he believed that his surviving comrades would be, and so, just before the evening shadows, we set out together.

"We found the cave and forty Armenian men and food and welcome.

"After a few days we started out to find a place of safety. We tried to keep to the mountain roads and avoid the Kurds and Turkish villages, but one day we were discovered by a Turkish patrol and pursued. I hid among the rocks of a narrow ravine and waited. I heard the fighting, and the rifle fire and the shouts. They died in the distance and all day I waited, crouched there alone, for they had said that they would return for me. They did when it was almost dark; five of them returned, the others had been killed.

"We traveled through the mountains day upon day, each day more weary, more footsore and hungry. None of us knew how we came upon that camp in which you found me, but there it was before us one bright afternoon. The men went to work on the road and the women took me to their cabin. After that, until you came, there was nothing. We all worked and were hungry and wondered and feared. Each day was but the dread of another day. Often I thought of my

brothers in America, but for me they too might as well be dead. Then you came. Now I am not so afraid, and I am very happy."

Her story, as I have related it, is a dead thing without fire, for lost in my memory and entangled in a gossamer of words which somehow escape me, is the romantic and tragic Odyssey of my pretty, blue-eyed sister. I have not the power to tell it as she told it to me; the darkness of those mountains at night; the horror of the massacre from which she escaped; the desperate strangeness of those mountains. At best it seems as though I can but set down the bare outlines of what to an American must seem an unbelievable tale.

For the first night in months she had comfort and a room of her own. After she had gone to bed, I sat down for a long time in bitter fruitless thought; to desert the Turkish army was not enough, I must have revenge. I remembered Nuri Yousuf, the Arab, the Major Nuri Bey of the Turkish Army and I wondered if he too futilely sat and wanted revenge, or was he even then secretly leading his people!

Before noon of the next day report had spread in official circles that I had found my sister. A few days after her arrival I was surprised one morning to receive an unexpected visit from a strange gentleman, who introduced himself as a friendly Arab, just returning from Bagdad. He told me that he had heard in the village that I was an Armenian and seeking my parents, and that he merely had stopped by to tell me that there was quite a number of refugees in the vicinity of Bagdad; possible I might make inquiries there.

He impressed me as being quite too voluble a gentleman, adept in steering conversation in channels of his own liking. He mentioned the English army and stated that he had heard that they were paying handsome sums in gold for the services of foreign officers who knew the geography of the country or were able to reveal valuable military information.

By this time I was convinced that I was entertaining a member of our intelligence office, and mentally I remarked to myself that, when the opportunity arrived to desert the Turks, it would not be because of English gold, but for a long score I had to pay.

I thanked him for his kindness and said that I would certainly investigate the Armenian camps around Bagdad as soon as I reached that vicinity, but I reminded him that for the present I was an officer in the Turkish army and must attend strictly to duty.

Apparently he was convinced of my sincerity; certainly he eyed me close enough to form some conclusion.

As soon as he left, I dispatched a corporal to follow him, and within two hours I had my suspicions confirmed; the gentleman had gone directly to brigade headquarters.

CHAPTER XIII

The Palestine Front

On February 3, 1918, I was ordered to get my men in readiness to proceed to the Palestine front.

On February fifth we boarded trains and were under way. It was on this journey that I first learned that after all I might have an opportunity to further Armenian national independence sooner than I expected. I casually struck up a conversation with an officer of the Intelligence Bureau who became quite confidential through too much whisky.

"Things," he said confidentially, "look pretty dark for this expedition. We have not only the allies, but now a strong army of Armenian volunteers from America. Besides this, most of the strong Arab tribes have revolted and are banded under the leadership of the traitor Nuri Yousuf and Jafar, Ali-Riza, Said, Nuri and Kadir. The Arab sheiks are in revolt against us. Even the weaker tribes and the people in this part of the country are against us and refuse to sell us food, claiming that our money is worthless."

I have never known before, or since, of one man drinking whisky and doing another man so much good.

I sympathized with my inebriated comrade and remarked to myself that perhaps soon my hour would come.

After eleven hours we arrived in Aleppo and our

division camped in its environs for ten days before proceeding further.

The problem of properly caring for my sister had given me many a restless night, still day after day I delayed any decisive action. It was increasingly obvious to me that I could not continue to have her with me, yet now that I had found her, I was reluctant that we should part. She had become more than my sister; she had become a symbol, one of my people whom I had taken from the Turks; one whom they dared not destroy while I was near.

I knew that I must not, could not, take her to the front, nor did I wish to leave her alone in Aleppo. I prepared a petition to the military appointed governor of Aleppo, requesting that they provide Baizar with safe conduct to Constantinople, where she would live with my friends with whom she would be safe and happy. My superior officers immediately indorsed my request and I naturally expected that traveling arrangements would be made.

On the following day my petition was returned with this curt refusal:

> "The traveling of Armenians to Constantinople is strictly forbidden and we suggest that Captain Torossian have his sister accompany him to the front, or else leave her stationed here in one of the surrounding villages."

The refusal was undiplomatic, for it reflected upon the prestige of my division and the authority of my commander who was very friendly toward me. I knew

that he would be extremely offended, but I did not expect him to become so enraged as he did.

"This," he said, his face livid, "this, Captain Torossian, is an outrageous insult; an act of tyranny, unwarranted and improper. We are soldiers, and when one of a group of officious and pompous rubber stamps, denies us the slightest consideration while at the risk of our lives we are protecting them, then the limit of endurance is reached."

He ordered me to follow him and the two of us, accompanied by several of his staff, set out for the governor's office. He led the way at a trot but his choler was up and we arrived at a gallop in a whirl of dust.

My commander brushed by the guards and pell-mell we followed him. I expected anything to happen, and, I imagine, so did the sentinel outside the governor's quarters when we burst upon him.

By this time the commander's voice was brusque. "Is your master inside?" he demanded. "Tchabook seyleh (speak quickly) or I'll have the words choked from your throat."

The soldier was so young that down was still upon his cheeks. He turned pale and to my recollection never uttered a word, he simply opened the vestibule door leading to the main office.

The governor was sitting at his desk when in turn we burst in upon him and like a man jerked upon a string he was on his feet saluting.

The commander did not return the courtesy but threw my petition on the desk and I think in a pre-

cisely insolent and insulting tone demanded to know if the signature under the postscript was his.

Before the governor could answer, my commander had drawn his pistol and for the momemnt I was not sure that the governor had not been shot as he slumped in his chair mumbling, "What signature?"

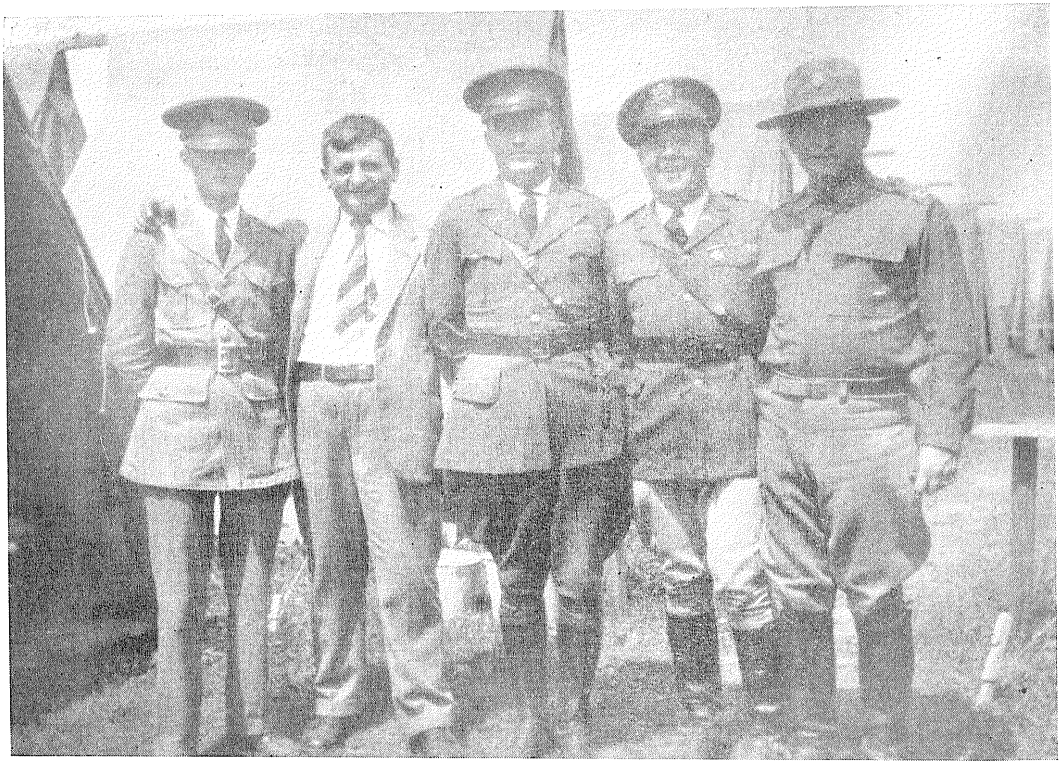
"Okou Shounou" (read that), the commander requested, "and then dare to tell us why you insult an officer of the army."

The governor insisted that he had failed to read it over before signing, humbly begged forgiveness and promised to make amends at once and send my sister to any point desired.

"You certainly will," my commander assured him, "or I'll have you executed in the public square." And we all knew that he would.

It was not until the incident was over that I began to regret my haste. Constantinople was easily four hundred miles distant and I soon would be at the front. An humiliated Turkish officer might arrange to have all sorts of accidents happen to an Armenian girl under Turkish escort during a journey of that distance. In Aleppo there would remain Turkish army officers who were my friends and there were several Armenian families who were unmolested. I left Baizar with one of these families confident that she would be protected and cared for. She cried when we parted not from fear, I think, because she had known and suffered all terrors, but from loneliness.

On February 17, 1918, our division continued on foot to Damascus. We made the march in ten days



Captain Torossian with a group of United States Army officers at camp.

and established ourselves in camp outside the city to await further orders.

On my first leave I rode into Damascus to get a better understanding of the situation there and to see if there were further rumors afloat concerning the Arab revolt.

All I found was that thousands of Armenian refugees were herded in a sordid section of the city and held there under almost unbelievable conditions. I investigated and found as many as fifty people crowded in filth and squalor in two rooms, without proper sanitation, or proper ventilation, and allowed barely sufficient food to keep them alive. A whole army of Turkish guards seemed stationed in the quarter refusing to even permit the prisoners to step out-of-doors.

When I returned to camp I discussed the matter with my commander who agreed to accompany me to the Military Governor's office and find out why these people were held.

We did not find the Military Governor in when we called the next day but our conversation with his secretary revealed that the refugees were being held upon instructions from the War Office at Constantinople.

Apparently nothing could be done. However, I discussed the matter with several German and Austrian officers of high rank and I learned from them that they had been in communication with the War Office for several weeks in the interest of my countrymen.

As my bitterness against the Turks grew so did my over acts in the interest of my countrymen; and so did my enemies increase.

Shortly after my visit to the Military Governor's

office my fellow officers and myself were invited to a dinner in our honor arranged by a group of a few wealthy merchants. We were informed that it was to be a most elaborate dinner with dancing and music. Fourteen of us rode out that night arrayed in our best uniforms and carrying as always our revolvers and swords.

We were guided to a mansion-like residence in the finest section of Damascus.

In the beginning there seemed nothing untoward, except that the merchants seemed to me in bearing and conversation to have been little associated with trade; they seemed more like military men or bureaucrats.

The dinner consisted of sex well drenched in liquor. The food on the sumptuously appointed table was eaten but was of indifference to my colleagues.

The guest of honor was a fortune teller, undoubtedly beautiful, I might say with authority completely beautiful, since she was practically nude. Her name was Aishe Hanum. But in the beginning the wonder was in the drinks. Promiscuously they served and promiscuously my comrades drank it: Spanish Malaga, Champagne, French and Greek coniaks, native Raki, Pilsener Beer and I can't recall the rest; drinks I never have heard of.

As dinner began, a gypsy orchestra started playing and a group of gypsy girls danced. They were costumed in a few gold and silver spangles and their dance I suppose was a perversion of an ancient gypsy folk dance of fertility. It looked like the dance of the gypsy cocottes to me. There was no doubt about it being sexually exciting. I never did drink very heavily and

I certainly did not mix my drinks as insanely as my comrades. I remained sober and our hosts interested me because like myself they were drinking but moderately although they simulated being quite drunk with the rest of the company.

Dinner over, drinking began again and then fighting in drunken fun over the gypsy girls. Revolvers were drawn and a few wild shots fired in the air. As the evening had grown I had several times noticed the merchants and Aishe Hanum watching me I felt with too much interest. Around two o'clock in the morning when our hosts too produced revolvers from their hip pockets and also began playfully pawing over the dancers I decided that there was some kind of plot afoot. Perhaps it was the innate suspicion of an Armenian for a Turk; something intuitive, a superacuteness of intrigue. I had drunk as sparingly as my hosts, but I feigned an unsteady gait and left the table under the pretext of finding a lavatory. I noticed as I left the room that the four merchants had arisen and were following me. In my quandary at the moment, I decided that perhaps the lavatory might be as safe a place as any. I hastened to it, dodged inside and locked the door. The only thing for me to do was to examine my revolver and await developments. I had been right. I heard them outside and a partially understood remark about their good fortune in separating me from my fellow officers convinced me that it would be unhealthy for me to leave as I had entered. I looked around for a way to escape and found a narrow window through which I could barely squeeze. I raised the window quietly enough and hung from the sill for

the fifteen foot drop to the ground where the window crashed. I let go and landed partially on my feet. I had barely picked myself up when they began shooting at me from another window. I answered the shots and dodged around the corner of the building but not before I had received a flesh wound in my arm. I ran along the cover of a wall, slipped through a little used gate, adjusted my uniform as best I could, threw a cloak over my wounded arm and on the thoroughfare hailed the first landau I could find and set out for headquarters. At headquarters I reported the incident to the Albanian Major Selim Bey who was on headquarters staff and friendly. Afterwards we looked at the wound and found that the bullet had grazed the arm causing a more bloody than serious injury. He advised me not to report the incident nor the injury which could very carefully be dressed without an M. D.

The following day a report was sent to headquarters that I had shot two merchants with intent to kill (that was the first inkling I had that my shots had been lucky). Major Selim Bey issued a statement to the effect that I had left the banquet at one o'clock at his request and from the hours of 1:30 to 5:00 a. m. I had been helping him upon headquarters reports and that the worthy merchants must be confused. Fortunately my comrades had been too drunk to know what had happened. There were no further developments but the Major later learned that a plot to assassinate me had been afoot and that it apparently had its origin with the Governor of Aleppo in connivance with the branch of the Union and Progress Party of

Damascus. Naturally, there was nothing to be done about it other than to be careful in the future.

Finally, came the orders to proceed for active duty on the Palestine front.

We marched for seventeen days and finally joined forces with the Seventh Army Corps at the city of Nablus.

The situation we found to be extremely grave. The British already had captured Bethlehem, Jafa, Jerusalem, and Jericho and had collected a force of one hundred fifty thousand men along the Palestine front from the shores of the Mediterranean to the eastern banks of the Jordan river and along the western banks to the desert of Arabia.

In an effort to check this Allied advance the Turks had mobilized a force of one hundred twenty-five thousand men under command of the German General von Falkenhayn. This powerful force comprising the Fourth, Seventh, and Eighth armies was composed of the best trained soldiers in the Turkish Army. Later on Marshal Liman von Sanders took command of these forces.

Our artillery regiment was stationed at Vadi Hummur, seven miles from Nablus on the western banks of the Jordan. The district was hilly and not too advantageous for the placing of artillery and we were obliged to arrange our batteries over a considerable area extending from the river bank to the foot hills in order to protect large units of infantry which were stretched along this course.

Almost directly south of us at a distance of four miles was the hill of El-Mousallac occupied by a strong

British force. The Turks made several attempts to take this position because it controlled the entrance to Jericho but they were repulsed with heavy losses each time.

The weather became unbearably hot and hordes of mosquitoes from the nearby swamps infested the camps and spread typhus and malaria. Hundreds of officers and soldiers were ill in the hospitals for five or six weeks at a time. Then swarms of scorpions came out and it was necessary to dig up their dens for miles around to destroy them.

It was no pleasant holiday, waiting.

On April 29, 1918, the Australian Division of the enemy launched a vigorous attack on the eastern banks of the Jordan against the Yelderim (shell shock) Turkish Cavalry Regiment and our Fourth Army. The fighting began at 3:30 a. m. and the attack grew in intensity until 8:00 a. m. The Turkish lines were broken and they were rapidly retreating in irregular order toward the Amman Mountains. Strong British and Australian units were in pursuit and from observation it looked as though they were headed directly for possession of the Endamen Bridge which crossed the Jordan. The capture of that position would have been fatal to our west bank divisions as the enemy by crossing the bridges could easily surround us. We immediately judged the urgency of our situation and prepared for a quick retreat. Fortunately for us, preparations were not necessary because for some unaccountable reason the British Cavalry rode on past the bridge and established themselves about seven miles further in the vicinity of Tabinehi.

The advantage now swung to the Turks. At 2:00 p. m. we were ordered to open artillery fire and set down an incessant barrage of heavy shells and shrapnel. In less than an hour we had forced them from their position near Tabinehi. A rapid pursuit across the Eudamen Bridge resulted in the capture of a large number of British prisoners. Our infantry suddenly began bayoneting and robbing the prisoners and several officers and myself had to drive our horses like mad over the bridge and flourish our revolvers before we could bring to a halt what threatened to be another massacre.

Our apparent victory was so pleasing to the German General Commander and his Turkish aides that it was planned to launch a counter attack in June and attempt to recapture Jericho.

My opinion was that we were too greatly outnumbered to attempt such an action. However, it remained just that, my opinion, and so on June eighth everything was in readiness for the attack. The German infantry was intrenched on the hills to the west of Jericho, their right and left flanks protected by the forty-sixth and forty-eighth Turkish Regiments.

On the morning of June 7, 1918, I left our position for German Regiment Headquarters to which I was appointed to act as Communication and Inspection officer. I set out with two philemas, one signaler and six telephone linemen. It was necessary for us to lay the wire and make proper connections all along our route. Orders were to reach our destination not later than seven o'clock that evening. I was suffering that day from a heavy attack of malaria and could barely stay

mounted on my horse. And my mind was heavy with the conviction that the whole plan was doomed to a failure that might mean my capture by the British and end my personal plans for Armenian national independence which I now felt sure would come in an Arab uprising.

We lost our way around mid afternoon and wandered confusedly in the hills until sunset was almost upon us. And then we were spied by British airmen and fired upon.

We found cover in a nearby wood and remained there a while. Finally we heard the noise of heavy carts to our left. We made our way to a narrow pass and waited. Friend or enemy? German mule drivers and their carts came into view and they put us on our proper course.

A few miles further on we came on two tents well hidden among trees and found the occupants German officers awaiting our arrival. In half an hour we had made our way to a position on an adjoining field and prepared to rest until 2:50 the following morning when operations were to commence. Although my head had cleared considerably I was glad of the rest.

At twenty minutes to three we were awakened and hurried to our positions.

The German Major in charge ordered me to call the commander of the Turkish artillery and request him to commence firing promptly at 3:50.

Orders were followed through and at the exact time we could hear the roar of the Turkish batteries. They shelled the enemy's positions incessantly for twenty minutes. Then came the report that the German in-

Captain Torossian, Chief de platon cavalry headquarters, Armenian Legion, under the French from Beirut to Cilicia.

fantry were advancing boldly on El-Moussalla Hill.

Within an hour we received a second report telling of the capture of the first line trenches of the enemy. Then came news that the second, and finally the third line trenches had fallen into our hands.

The tide of battle surprised me but did not turn my head as it did that of the German Major directing who wired General Headquarters from our post that Jericho would be captured by sunrise.

At 5:00 a. m., to the German's chagrin, the battle still waxed heavily as we could hear from the sounds of the guns; what was most disquieting was that we were receiving no further reports over the wires.

The German officers directing the battle from our position became anxious and we moved nearer the lines.

At 6:30 a. m. the sun had risen high in the sky and still no reports by wire while the din of the artillery fire seemed to increase from the English side.

Finally we made an observation post from which we could definitely observe the battle lines. The steady advance of the Germans immediately was obvious to us but the Turkish regiments were noticeably falling behind. The Turks seemed to be confused and to have lost contact with the Germans.

In half an hour it was all over. The English had taken advantage of the break in the Turkish lines and swept them under heavy fire while the German infantry was surrounded and captured.

The Turks unaware of what had happened to the Germans continued fighting fiercely on El-Mousalla Hill but soon they too were subdued.

The hills and valley began swarming with English

troops and now the thoroughly disheartened German Major said we too might just as well surrender, since our capture would be a matter of an hour or more at the most. I convinced him, however, that if we remained in hiding there was an excellent chance of not being found and I assured him that when darkness fell I could lead them all back to headquarters.

We set out as soon as the black of night was upon us and mile after mile, slowly, cautiously we picked our way through the hills. Just before sunrise we came upon the German supply camp. The night before, we learned, a great dinner had been ordered for the anticipated victory and military bands were ordered in attendance to help celebrate. In half light before dawn when we came upon them the headquarters officers were not a happy lot. Shortly afterwards other officers began to arrive and each one repeated our version of the battle with but minor change of detail.

A few days later a court martial was held in an endeavor to fix responsibility for the failure of the offensive. General von Sanders presided and listened to the Turks and Germans, each calling the kettle black. Finally the blame was placed nowhere and the case was dismissed.

On July 24, 1918, it was decided to move our three divisions to a more favorable location of Beita where fig and olive trees grew in abundance and a little stream ran clear and pure and very cold. We were just eight miles south of Nablus.

One afternoon, toward the end of July, I visited Nablus for several days on official business and while there frequented a Turkish coffee shop popular among

officers. At almost every table, officers would gesticulate and discuss excitedly the war situation over their coffee. The general outlook was gloomy and discouraging and reports were current that soon a gigantic offensive of Armenian, French and English was to be launched against us. I could not gather a word about the Arabs who to me represented my greatest hope for Armenian national independence. They were a people whom I understood, whose language I spoke and with whom I had the greatest opportunity for contact.

Hostilities had ceased, there was now even desultory firing or raiding forays; each side rested and regathered its forces and tautly waited.

CHAPTER XIV

In the Arabian Secret Service

On August 12, 1918, I was again in Nablus and on visiting the Military Club, there, one afternoon, I was surprised to learn that an officer who had represented himself as a classmate of mine at the Military College had called on the previous day and left a message for me.

Instantly suspicious, I interrogated the club manager but all I could learn was that the officer intended returning the following day at 2:00 p. m. hoping that he might see me.

I became extremely curious and determined to be on hand so on the following day I arrived at the club at 1:30 and selected a quiet corner in which I could sit and observe all entrants yet be unobserved.

Shortly after two o'clock I saw a tall, dark-skinned officer come in, dressed in the uniform of a Turkish lieutenant. He did not immediately go to the manager and inquire if I were there but his eyes swept the room in a swift appraisal of its occupants. He walked up and down once or twice and directly past me. His movements were quick and nervous. He walked up and down the room once again and I noticed him looking at me sharply. Suddenly he walked up to me and smiled and came to a sharp salute and offered me his hand.

"Why, merhaba, machalla beyem, naselsenes (why,

how do you do), Captain Torossian," he said in the manner of one who just had seen an old acquaintance.

Despite the fact that I had been on the alert I was startled and must have shown it because for the veriest instant he seemed confused and taken aback. I knew that I had never seen the man before and could not but admire his composure.

"Beni tanemadenmi?" (Can't you guess who I am) he asked. "You really seem to have quite forgotten me."

"Otourenes (Sit down), lieutenant," I suggested, determined to learn his game. "To my embarrassment I must confess that I do not recall having met you before. May I ask your name and to what division you belong?"

He assumed a puzzled smile and artfully avoided answering my query.

"This is most disappointing to me, Captain, as I remember both you and your friend Muharrem very well. It was very sad that he should have been killed. Possibly I have greatly changed since our school days," he remarked laughing. "However, if you fail to recognize me I am sure that you will remember meeting some months ago a vry dear friend of mine, Nuri Yousuf Bey."

His look was knowing and I became uncomfortable. That the man knew a great deal about me I was sure. Another intelligence officer trying to trip me up! Nuri Yousuf Bey, the rebel Arab leader! A man to be reckoned with. I tried to collect my thoughts and answer indifferently, still parrying.

"Nuri Yousuf Bey! The name sounds familiar.

Will you kindly describe the gentleman to me in order that matters may be clearer? You can understand, lieutenant," I added, "I should like to have matters more clear."

My emphasis on the last sentence made him smile and a friendly, knowing look came into his eyes. After all he had too been gambling in the dark and I had not acknowledged that I was Captain Torossian. I later learned that he had seen a not very satisfactory snapshot of me and had listened to a rather sketchy description which I seemed roughly to approximate when first he saw me in my corner.

He bent over, as though bowing and offering me a cigarette, said in a half whisper, "Captain, let us understand each other. You are a friend of Nuri Yousuf Bey. You met him on a train while enroute from the Roumanian frontier. You spent a night at his home in Sari-Yaar. Is this not true? You two had a great deal in common and still have."

I gambled again, gambled upon the sincerity of two vivid dark eyes, of his apparent eagerness to convince me, upon my intuition. I nodded my head affirmatively.

"When and where did you last see Nuri Yousuf?" I asked.

He sat down and in a guarded undertone said, "A few days ago at his Arabian headquarters. He wished to have a mouhim khaber (important message) delivered to you when he learned you were on this front. I agreed to disguise myself and try to find you and deliver it. And here I am."

Outwardly of course I did not tremble but inwardly I was more excited than I had been since the first days

of the war. The time for which I had hoped and wondered had arrived, and from the instant of our departure a few minutes later I was irretrievably committed to a new cause.

"Tchabook," (Quickly), I said, looking about, "your message."

"Not here, Captain," he restrained me. "If you have nothing to detain you, ride with me to Sheik Hadji Saidh's village, an hour's ride from here. This is not a happy meeting place for plans such as ours and Sheik Hadji Saidh is not under suspicion.

We called for our horses and rode off together, two Turkish officers out for an afternoon canter. For five miles we rode in the direction of Besan and then drew up our horses sharply before a great gateway in a high stone wall which enclosd an Arabian village.

Inside we found armed guards who, after countersigns, escorted us to the sheik's quarters near which forty large Arabian horses, saddled and restive, were haltered to a rail.

A heavy curtain was pushed aside and I found myself in a long council room and confronted by the stern, bronzed, inscrutable faces of almost a score of Arab sheiks.

They were on their feet before I could speak and like a chorus of deep voices gave their salute of welcome, "Ess-Selam-Alekum."

"Ess-Selam-Alekum," I returned the greeting as Sheik Hadji Saidh strode forward smiling to shake my hand.

It seemed like a dream.

"Captain, you have come in our midst and we are

glad for we know that you too have a wish to throw off the Turkish yoke. Our people, your people and my people, have suffered too long."

During the next half hour he rapidly sketched the union of the Arab tribes which had been brought about and in the name of my friend Nuri Yousuf asked me to join them as one of their leaders.

I agreed and placed myself at their command. I tried to speak calmly and I suppose that I did but my mind excitedly seemed to refuse to alight any place.

A great silver cloth was brought in and spread upon the floor and we sat down to dinner to celebrate our alliance.

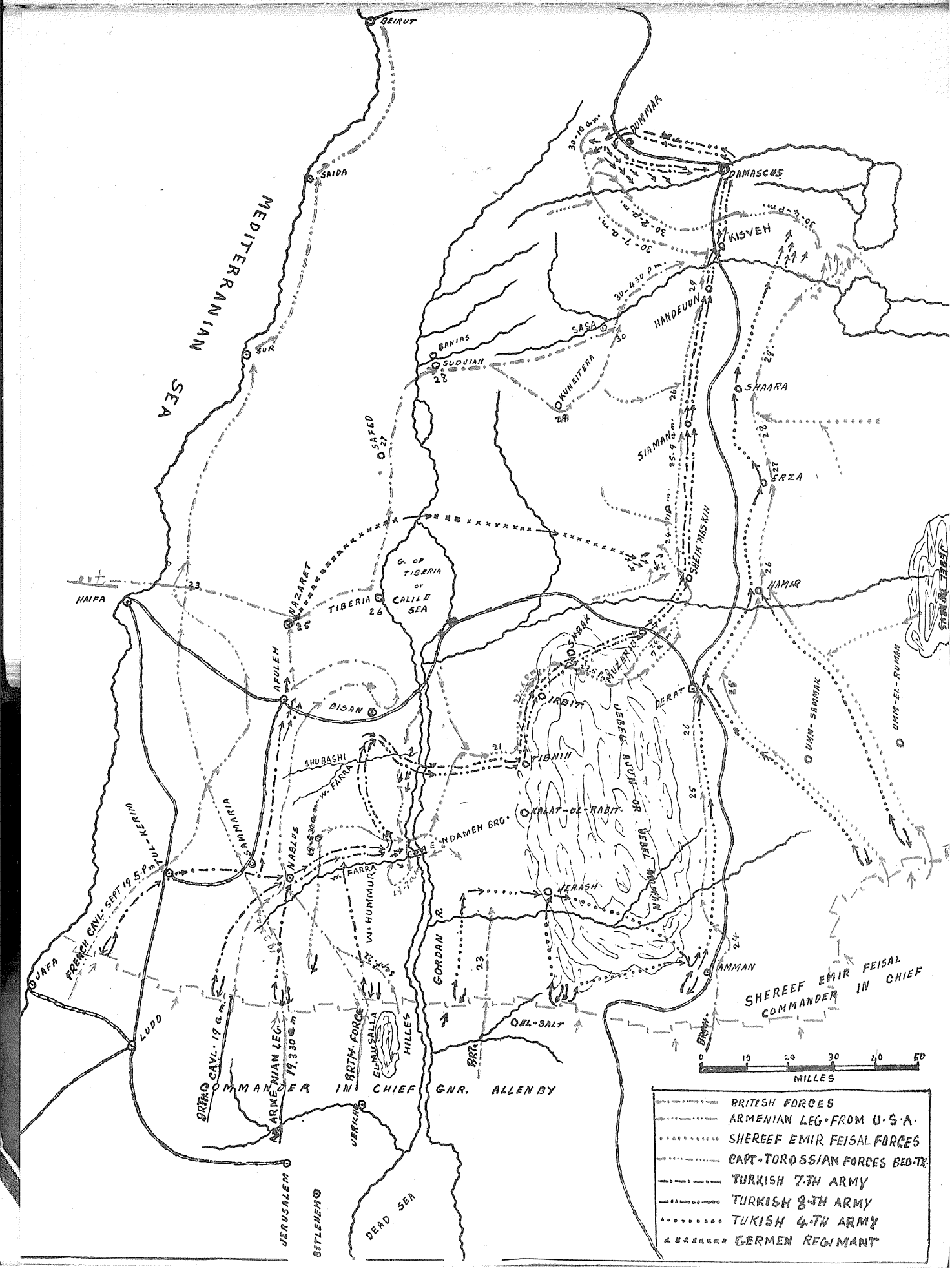
I left for camp before twilight promising to return within two days.

That night the thought of sleep never came to me. My mind was a race track for countless plans until I seemed bewildered. At last! Revenge! How well I knew the weakness of the Turkish army and the best points of attack. I studied my maps until daybreak and outlined in my mind the best course to pursue.

The intervening days and nights were endless.

On the second day I received leave and left camp early in the morning. As I approached the Sheik's village I noticed from afar that a large procession of Arab horsemen was entering the gate. I galloped my horse and followed through.

Inside the gates I had not time to dismount when a sheik came dashing up and there was my lieutenant friend of the Officers' Club. He handed me a letter as I dismounted and asked me to read it. It proved to be from Nuri Yousuf and I quote it:


MEDITERRANIAN SEA
BEIRUT
SAIDA
SUR
DUMMAR
DAMASCUS
MISVEH
HANDEUUN
SASA
BANIAS
SUDOJIAN
KUNEITERA
SHAARA
ERZA
SIAMAN
SHEIK MASKIN
SAFED
NAZARET
TIBERIA
G. OF TIBERIA or CALILE SEA
HAIFA
NAMIR
JEBEL DRUSE
AFULEH
BISAN
SHUBASHI
W. FARRA
TIGNIH
IRBIT
SHAK
DERAT
UMM-EL-RUMAN
UMM-SAMMAK
JEBEL AJUN OR JEBEL BELKA
KALAT-UL-RABT
E. NDAMEH BRG.
SAMARIA
NABLUS
FARRA
W. HUMMURA
VERASH
JAFA
FRENCH CAVL. SEPT 19 5 p.m.
TUL-KERIM
LUDD
GORDAN R.
AMMAN
SHEREEF EMIR FEISAL COMMANDER IN CHIEF
EL-SALT
BRIT. CAVL. 19 a.m.
ARMENIAN LEG. 11.30 a.m.
BRTH. FORCE
ELMUSALLA
HILLES
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
BETLEHEM
DEAD SEA
COMMANDER IN CHIEF GNR. ALLENBY
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILLES
BRITISH FORCES
ARMENIAN LEG. FROM U.S.A.
SHEREEF EMIR FEISAL FORCES
CAPT. TOROSSIAN FORCES BED. TK.
TURKISH 7.TH ARMY
TURKISH 8.TH ARMY
TUKISH 4.TH ARMY
GERMEN REGIMANT

My dear Captain:

Three months ago I learned that you were attached to a division stationed in the vicinity of Nablus and since that time I have been endeavoring to get in touch with you. For a time that seemed impossible for I did not wish to jeopardize your safety by sending a messenger. Finally the idea of the Officers' Club in Nablus occurred to me and thus I came to send my relative Sheik Hadji Mahmoud to interview you.

Hadji Mahmoud is a trustworthy and noble man who has done much to cement our people together in a great union and arouse them against the Turks. In Hadji Mahmoud you can place complete dependence.

That you have joined forces with us is a felicitous event for both of us. We have many wrongs to avenge.

Reveal and discuss freely all your plans with Sheik Hadji Saidh who will appreciate your help and guidance. Fifteen Arab sheiks, including Bedouins on the bank of the Jordan river, are at your command. They will supply soldiers and military equipment. A secret committee will take care of all expenses.

Remember I am placing all faith and confidence in you and believe that success must crown our efforts. Almighty Allah is on our side and freedom is at hand. May He grant that your nation too will be restored.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible. In the meantime in the name of Allah I salute you and remain

Nuri Yousuf.

Always I have prized that letter.

At the meeting of the sheiks to which I proceeded, the plans for action were up for discussion. Most of the assembled sheiks were of the opinion that a strong force of soldiers from the various tribes should be gathered in the rear of Damascus and thence turn about and strike the Turks in the rear.

I argued strongly against such action, pointing out that it was a measure too obvious and one easily detected by Turkish spies. I explained the somewhat desperate straits of the Turkish army and the low morale of both officers and men. My plan was a swift and unexpected descent upon their lines which I believed would throw them into a panic. I suggested that each tribe gather a force of cavalry and sufficient provisions and be ready to gather at Sheik Hadji Saidh's village upon quick notice.

Hadji Saidh looked favorably upon my plan and thus the others were soon won over. Trusted couriers were appointed and signs and signals agreed upon to direct the gathering of the tribes and Bedouins.

The more the sheiks thought upon my plan to strike a hard, swift, telling blow, the more it appealed to their fiery temperaments and our meeting ended in pleasant accord.

Before I returned to my Turkish post, I wrote a letter to Nuri Yousuf in which I outlined the plans

which I had presented to the sheiks and requested his approval. I also asked him if he could send me news of Muharrem's family.

Since I had parted with Muharrem's mother and sisters in Constantinople, only two tiny censored notes had reached me from Jemileh. I was becoming anxious as to their safety and eager to see Jemileh once again. By nature I was no fire brand, but my love was no less intense because emotionally it was not vividly expressive. I longed for her often in the manner of one long schooled in patience.

Another secret meeting of the sheiks was scheduled toward the end of the week and once again I was able to obtain leave for the morning. I cannot recall the pretext I used on that occasion but I do know that I realized that my too frequent leaves must inevitably arouse suspicion and so I followed an old seldom used trail to the sheik's village. Before I left I applied for one week's leave since the entire front was quiet and no immediate hostilities were planned. I had no idea then what I should do with the leave were it granted but cherished the idea of passing through the Turkish lines and greeting Nuri Yousuf at his headquarters.

Sheik Hadji Mahmoud met me before the council of sheiks met and handed me Nuri Yousuf's answer to my letter:

> My dear Captain:
>
> The plans you have outlined I approve of most heartily and commend you to carry them out with all possible skill. You have a full understanding

of the Turkish position and I authorize you to act according to your best judgment.

In this section we are well organized and making great headway. May Allah strengthen us to the end.

You have wished for information concerning your benefactor and friend the Arab Pasha and his family. I regret that my news is not happy. The Pasha was one of our staunchest supporters and did all in his power to help organize for the restoration of Arab independence. At heart he detested the viciousness of the Union and Progress Party and condemned to the depths of his being not only their misgovernment of the Arabs but their Armenian excesses; these he deplored.

When the Pasha left Constantinople and came to Arabia he was a heartbroken aging man unable to reconcile himself to the death of his son, Muharrem. Less than seven months ago he died in the city of Jerusalem, weighed down by sorrow. Immediately after his death, his wife and daughter left for the city of Gaza, the place of her birth. Recently I have heard that the elder daughder Ferideh has married but that the younger daughter Jemileh is incurably ill of tuberculosis and unable to leave her bed.

My dear Captain I hope that you will forgive me when I allude to a most personal matter. At the time of her father's death Miss Jemileh, then very ill, confided in me of your love for each other and made me promise to find you and bring you to her. I want to fulfill that promise and I want

to talk with you, Captain. If you can possibly obtain several days' leave without arousing suspicion, do so at once. Sheik Hadji Mahmoud will conduct you here safely and then to Gaza and your very beloved.

Sorrow too is the lot of brave men. May Allah comfort you.

I await your answer and send my good wishes.

Nuri Yousuf.

In war and amidst the intrigue of revolt there is little time for a man to falter under what may seem the bludgeoning of an unjust fate. I had folded the letter and was touching my chin, my forehead, and had raised my right palm high in the air in Arab salute while the last words paraded before my eyes.

I sometimes think that my experience had squeezed my emotions into a calloused ball and forced them deep into my heart where forever since they have lain burning but inarticulate. Sorrow was something which I still could feel but never express. In the midst of war we were planning an armed rebellion and each moment was pregnant with impending history and complex with cabals and dangerously secret meetings.

Me met in council and perfected our plans. And at the conclusion of the meeting arrangements were made that I should visit their leader Nuri Yousuf.

Upon return to our encampment I went to headquarters in the afternoon and made a special plea for leave under the pretext of visiting my sister in Aleppo. My leave was granted.

On the morning of September 4, 1918, I reached

Sheik Hadji Saidh's village where I found Hadji Mahmoud awaiting me. I changed to an Arab attire, adopted an Arab name and in company with Hadji Mahmoud set out for the valley of the Jordan. Our progress was slow, and once in the river valley, perilous, as both sides of the river were closely watched. We rode along the narrow, tortuous paths of the hillsides and so managed to keep safely away from Turkish paths and outposts. Finally in the shelter of darkness we forced our horses into the water and for twenty minutes they struggled through unsure footing against the heaving impact of the river current. Safely over we stole the few hours of night before dawn and slept. We arose at sunlight and continued on until within a few hours we reached the vicinity of Wadi-El-Yousuf.

A short distance farther on we came in sight of Arabian headquarters and as we galloped toward them Hadji Mahmoud spurred his horse ahead giving that weird shrieking Arab call. It was answered almost immediately by many throats and followed by a mad crush of flowing robed horsemen.

I met Nuri Yousuf and renewed a friendship with delight. But the times were critical and we had but few moments for personal amenities. The entire day we spent over maps and plans and secret strategies.

Toward late afternoon I left with my guides as hastily as I had come and we turned our horses in the direction of Gaza. Nuri Yousuf had secured safe passage for us through the British lines and sent with us as far as El-Sheore an escort of ten Arab horsemen. We rode on, and reached a small Arab village near

Hebron where we partook of our evening meal with the village chief.

On through the night we traveled until around four o'clock in the morning we entered the ancient and endlessly beautiful city of Gaza. We were all worn out with fatigue and my companions sought rest in an old garden rather than disturb the friends whom we might have sought. I did not sleep but brooded motionless until the sun had risen very high in the heavens. I no longer clearly remember my thoughts. It seems now that I sat and reviewed all my life, its joys and sorrows; I saw fond hopes pass by in parade like broken men. I seemed detached from the scene, dispassionate, a spectre half asleep and beyond touching.

Toward noon, alone, I made my way through the sunlit winding streets flower scented and hushed as though the world were in whisper. I reached a very old stone mansion and while my hand trembled when I knocked I was conscious of no emotion. Something within me seemed to have died.

A young serving girl, her eyes timorous with fright, inquired whom I wished to see. When I asked her if the Pasha's family lived there she seemed to shrink back as though fearful of answering. I assured her that I was a friend of the family and asked her to tell the Pasha's wife simply that an Artillery Captain was waiting.

I could hear the light tread of a woman's footsteps upon the stairs and for a moment life seemed to stir in me and in my mind for an instant I dreamed that Jemileh was coming. But I knew that such could not

be true because my friend had told me that she was dying.

After a time the door cautiously opened and I saw two infinitely sad but suspicious eyes staring at me.

"Madame Pasha," I bowed, European fashion, "I hope you will not fear me because of a costume I have adopted for prudence and safety. Do you remember Sarkis Torossian?"

"Allah! Allah! Can this be true?" her words soft and mystic were like the recitation of a prayer.

The door opened, she stumbled and was in my arms crying. Alternately she wept and lamented the tale of her misfortune. She cried in my arms, a broken, disheartened woman, in unassuageable anguish over the loss of her son and husband. And though the words I spoke must have had some meaning, I still felt like a shadow lost in a world of men, a spectre of the cruelty of living.

I spoke of Jemileh as one repeating a name and I learned that she lived no one knew how and that each hour, it seemed, she must die.

Down a winding path through a garden where flowers grew and olive trees bordered walls I followed a woman in black. Some place behind me, far away in the distance romance had been born and once my heart had beat a faster rhythm. Now I walked a man in whom a flame had burned and died and was not dead but sealed in some hidden chamber of his being. Time, emotion, all had had ceased and dry eyed I walked to see romance die in an old Arabian garden. Under olive trees I saw a tiny bed over which Muharrem's mother stooped and whispered.

Captain Torrossian with two group leaders behind Turkish Guerrilla lines.

Somewhere a faint voice called Sarkis and a tiny hand as transparent as a butterfly's wing fluttered toward me and fell. God! God! I tell you life should never be so cruel to a man. Deep inside me I cried, cried I tell you like a boy with a broken heart but my eyes were dry as I stood above her and wondered at the brilliance of her great dark eyes in the pallor of her sunken cheeks, wondered that a voice still lived in a body so spent. Her radiant beauty had vanished as a dream goes. I knelt down and kissed her wasted hand, delicate and fragile.

"My darling, can this be true that I am in your arms at last? I was so afraid that death would find me first," she tried to whisper more but coughed and blood bedewed her lips and pain crept into her eyes.

I bade her quiet and took her in my arms and talked of everything: told her of my sister, of my parents, of the conspiracy in which I was engaged. I talked that I might hear the sound of my words and thus know that both of us still lived. She fell asleep and I was glad, for I had to leave at once and spend the night in conference of war at an Arab sheik's house.

On the morrow I was at her side again, wondering, wondering how life remained with her. I noticed that during the morning the lustre seemed to leave her eyes which were like stars. Towards midafternoon when dinner was served in the olive grove and her mother and I ate by her bedside she seemed to brighten.

The servants had carried the table away and the Pasha's wife had gone into the house for a moment when Jemileh was seized with a terrible coughing spell, then she seemed to choke and tried to rise up only to

fall back upon a blood-soaked pillow. I ran for help and the servants came with the Pasha's wife. I raised Jemileh in my arms, the pain and terror in her eyes melted until they were bright as stars again, stars in an oriental night, the lids drooped slowly and so she died, as a dream passing.

They buried her the next day while the sun shone and the Hodja intoned his scripture from the Koran. What happened to me between the moment of her death until the earth fell upon her grave I do not know. People filed away. I stood alone and then walked to the road where my friends waited. We rode for seven hours and in the darkness passed through the city gates of Jerusalem.

In the morning we visited the office of the Grand Mufti of the Arabs and outlined our plans. Then to the British Military Governor's office for safe conduct to Jericho and the end of the Allied lines. I moved like a man who was dreaming yet, so strong was habit and training that I mentally noted the powerful army of Canadian, Australian, and Indian troops encamped for miles along the outskirts of the city. Such a force easily could have crushed the demoralized Turkish divisions and I marveled that they rested idly there.

At Jericho our papers were carefully examined and we were detained until dusk. Then with heavily bandaged eyes, that we might be unable to observe their positions, we were led for a hundred yards to the British outpost of Wadi-Aujah.

All through that night we rode, stealing our way along the valley of Jordan. At dawn we entered Sheik

Saidh's village. I did not rest but discarded my Arab garb for my captain's uniform and was off for Turkish headquarters at Nablus. An exhausted body means a dreamless sleep and I wanted to forget.

CHAPTER XV

On the Road to Bloody Revenge

Ten days after my return from behind the Arab lines I attended the third secret council at Sheik Saidh's village and at last received word from Sheik Nuri Yousuf that the hour of our revenge was almost upon us. A combined attack of the English and French under General Allenby was to occur within the ensuing few days and we were warned to be in readiness to strike in unison with their forces. Special arrangements were made to have the Arab Cavalry mobilized and ready for instant action.

Four days later on September 19, 1918, as early as 3 a. m. the terrific roar of cannon broke upon the entire western side of the Palestine front, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

A strong fleet of French and English ships stationed in the Mediterranean waters poured devastating fire upon the Eighth Turkish Army at Tulkerim causing the Turks to break their lines and retreat in disorder in the direction of Nablus where the Seventh Turkish Army was stationed.

At the same time several English regiments and a force of Armenian volunteers (the French Legion d'Orient) were conducting a united attack along the whole front, resulting in less than an hour in complete disaster to the Turks who became panic-stricken and rushed in the direction of headquarters in extreme dis-

order. Frantic orders buzzed over wires. I managed to get a message to the Arab who had been stationed in Nablus for over a week awaiting word when the hour was ripe. It was around 3:30 p. m. when he left for Sheik Saidh's village with word from me to call their cavalry together as I was about to join them.

I remained at my post a while longer to further gauge the tide of the battle. Listening to reports I learned that the Armenian troops had broken through the Turkish center and were moving steadily forward while the English cavalry was in harassing pursuit of the fleeing Turks in other sections. The Turkish Commanders were in despair.

I received wire instruction from Chief of Staff Shevket Bey to leave my post and act as staff messenger between the Seventh and Eighth Armies. But I was ready to leave for my own purposes. My heart did not leap; it was cold; my revenge was emotionless. I did not answer him but cut the wires at my post, mounted my horse and almost rode over my startled orderly as I dashed wildly away. I rode my horse to its limit over the hills.

Shortly after 5:00 a. m. I reached Sheik Saidh's village and rode pell-mell into the midst of scores of white robed horsemen. While they saddled a fresh mount I changed from my captain's uniform to the Arab Gelibijeh and egil.

I rode to their head flourished my sword and called to them to follow me to the Endamen Bridge. I looked back as we rode wildly and saw the naked steel of their sabers flash as they flourished them, watched the rise and fall of the barrels of their rifles which

were slung over their backs and weighed the damage those hordes would inflict. Passion returned to me, a cold passion, the passion of the Arab for naked steel. We thundered over the hills to the valley of the Jordan.

By 6:45 we were at the bridge and in hiding awaiting the approach of the retreating Turks who I felt would cross the river at this point. I sent four horsemen out to cut the wires between Turkish General Headquarters and the Seventy-eight Army.

My judgment shortly was confirmed for soon a steady stream of men could be seen emerging from the narrow pass by the Mountains of Wadi-Farra. Through our binoculars we could see them struggling with their cannons in the very difficult going. A squadron of British airplanes swooped down upon them and the bombs that burst killed hundreds and wrecked artillery wagons and supply carts.

As the Turks approached nearer to the bridge we sprang out from our hiding place a hurricane of white robed horsemen and swept upon them ferociously in a wild dash. Our attack and the piercing war cry of the Arabs struck terror into them and they broke and scurried like rabbits for hiding places; they swerved to the left and took a northerly direction which led to Besan.

I immediately dispatched messengers to British Headquarters at Nablus reporting this new move and with my Arabs set off in pursuit. We cut in upon their rear lines in sudden, harrying sweeps, sabering hundreds and capturing some artillery and provisions. I no longer was a man, I was a killing machine. I no longer felt. Death was an old acquaintance. I killed

because life was dead within me and there was nothing left to do.

By a little after 8 a. m. the Seventh and Eighth Turkish Armies, in wild retreat, almost had reached the outskirts of Besan when the British cut in before them, headed them off and they were forced to surrender.

According to agreement, by 4:00 p. m. they were to march quietly into the Allied lines as prisoners of war, but while the British waited they set fire to their ammunition, trains and provisions and made another dash for liberty toward the Jordan river. The section through which they had to travel was very hilly and a rapid advance was not practicable; it was almost dawn on the morning of September 21, 1918, when they reached the water's edge. They began a disorderly scramble to reach the other bank and join forces with the Fourth Turkish Army and possibly set up another line of defense.

I fellowed them as closely as possible with my Arabs when I found that they had failed to abide the terms of their surrender. We caught up with their rear lines near the river and cut into their ranks time and again, in wild charges. Again we killed many with cold steel while others were drowned in their frantic attempts to cross the river.

In the meantime the English in pursuit rode up while there were still six thousand waiting to cross and took them prisoners again.

Although my force of barely over a thousand Arab horsemen was a mere handful in comparison with the fleeing Turks they were so completely demoralized

that they lost complete control and broke for any kind of cover when we charged in surprise attacks. We crossed the Jordan and continued to pursue and harass them. On the east banks of the Jordan they tried to rest but British airplanes bombed them and they were forced to run again. They headed toward Tibnih in their perilous retreat. The planes followed and I saw whole platoons wiped out by British bombs.

It was not until they reached the narrow mountain trails that they received some measure of relief, hidden as they were by the trees and bushes.

On and on thy went, turning north from Tibnih to Irbid.

We followed and by this time my horsemen had grown to nearly two thousand as scattered Arab tribes joined us as we passed. Our added numbers made us more bold and we kept the rear in constant terror.

On the evening of September 22, as the retreating army reached the vicinity of Irbid I noticed a heliogaph message flashed in the sky. It came from the General Commander of the Turkish forces and undoubtedly was a chance signal sent out with the remote hope that it might be seen. Evidently their wire communications had completely broken down. I interpreted the message and learned from that regiment that strong reinforcements were needed at once for the protection of Derat and Damascus.

The Turkish officers of the retreating army had read the message too for they forged ahead now in the direction of El-Muzarib. At El-Muzarib they tried to assemble their worn and bedraggled troops into some semblance of order and discipline and dispatched two

regiments southeast toward Derat while the remaining troops headed north toward Damascus.

I felt that they had made a serious blunder in dividing their forces and seized the opportunity. I led the Arabs in a particularly vicious attack on the forces hastening to the defense of Derat, causing one of the regiments to turn and run back toward El Muzarib while the other scattered in all directions.

We never gave them time to reassemble had their morale been great enough to enable them to do so. A quick, hard riding, slashing attack, usually a surprise, few prisoners, and we were gone.

After cutting the Derat bound regiments we galloped at breakneck speed after the other section of the retreating armies and caught up with them in the region of Sheik Miskin. This happened on September twenty-fourth and the encounter was bloody for we cut and hacked our way right through them; their losses in men were very heavy.

Off again. Little rest. We cut the Turkish wires again, this time between General Headquarters and the fort armies.

Encouraging news reached us; we learned that a powerful Arab army under Scheref Ermier Feisel, their commander-in-chief, and seven other able leaders among them, my friend Sheik Nuri Yousuf had made a concerted attack upon the Turkish stronghold of Derat and had completely routed and put to flight the Fourth Turkish Army which had been stationed there.

Now began the most momentous retreat of the war in the Near East. Separated by a distance of only

seven or eight miles the Seventh, Eighth, and Fourth Armies made no attempt to combine. They seemed paralyzed with fear and completely undisciplined as they fled with all their might to reach Damascus, their one remaining stronghold.

Never was vengeance wreaked more mercilessly on its victims than the punishment administered by the Arabs. Emir Feisel and his powerful army never let up in thier pursuit of the Fourth Army; they cut it to pieces and the Turks left behind them a river of blood.

Every day my forces, in pursuit of the Seventh and Eighth Armies, was growing steadily in numbers as hundreds of Arabs joined each day from villages and tribes in the interior. At last I counted nearly six thousand horsemen each more desperately and revengeful than the other.

In all my military career I never had witnessed such keenness of vision, such alertness, such rash courage and discipline as shown by these desert horsemen.

There was no such thing as surrender; the Turks knew that they might expect no quarter. It was perhaps the bloodiest retreat of the war. Of course we rested and slept for a few hours from time to time yet it seemed that never an eye closed or a muscle relaxed in our ranks during that memorable pursuit. I led a killing machine animated by hatred and it functioned perfectly. Emotion had dried within me and I was indifferent to death, whether I dealt it or dodged it.

On the morning of September thirtieth, around 5:30 a. m. we had arrived at a distance seven miles south of the city of Damascus. I felt that the enemy would

attempt to leave the city and break through so I took measures to circumvent such a plan. I ordered my forces to swing off at top speed in a north-westerly direction leading to one of the main highways to the city. By 10:30 a. m. we had arrived at a point where the road dips sharply and there we waited.

It was shortly after noon when we heard the sound of horses' hoofs in the distance. Within a few minutes our outposts at the top of the hill reported a fast moving force of Turkish Yelderim (shell shock) cavalry followed by infantry.

I called my men to their horses and their piercing war cry was a weird falsetto over the thunder of swift ridden horses. The Arabs were like mad men as they rode into the enemy slashing, cutting, plunging their steel into the startled Turks. After the first shock the Turks in desperation collected their forces and tried to battle their way through. Their losses were enormous and the fight was bloody and merciless. Within an hour the Turkish survivors were in retreat back to the city gates.

We did not follow. I ordered my hard riding forces back to near Kisve, a small village on the outskirts of Damascus and I felt directly in the path of the Fourth Turkish Army which was being pursued by Shereef Emir Feisel's men. I hoped to head off the Turks and break their advance to Damascus. It was after four in the afternoon when the Fourth Turkish Army appeared in disorder. Again like a torpedo, a white shrieking madness of wild horsemen we descended upon them and cut down hundreds. Our appearance was so sudden and the force of our onslaught so swift that

they made little or no attempt to defend themselves. We rode through and around them, and were gone before they could reorganize.

By 5:30 p. m. the Turkish position was extremely precarious. My forces were in front of them; Emir Feisel and his co-leaders were in their rear; the British under General Allenby had been making forced marches through the interior and were closing in on the western flank.

The Turks surrendered and rushed into the British lines for they knew that an Arab's yataghan (sword) never spared a foe.

That evening I joined Nuri Yousuf and the Arab leaders and heard them bless me in Allah's name.

Emotionally I still could not thrill to our victory. I had helped break the backbone of the Turkish army and the Turkish Empire had begun to tremble under the burden of defeat. In less than four weeks the Seventh and Eighth and Fourth Turkish Armies had been practically annihilated; thousands of wounded had been left to die by waysides; and countless thousands taken prisoners. Their German allies no longer could help as they were forced to move all available troops to the European front in their last desperate effort to stave off defeat.

On the morning of October 1, 1918, the combined Arab and English forces marched into Damascus and took possession of the city. Shereef Emir Feisel, Arab Commander-in-chief, did not enter the city until a few days later. He was greeted with the pomp and circumstance of a Caesar returned from victory. The varied colored flags of the Allies draped every window.

There was music in the air, martial music and wild cheering, and tumult and excitement.

Shereef Emir Feisel entered not as a conquering general but as a man of quiet dignity and he rode to the square where the Turkish General Jemal Pasha had seized upon noble Arab leaders and without even the travesty of trial by court martial had hanged them.

Shereef Feisel, a man of power and destiny, sensitive I think and kindly, had no words of military bombast. He raised his hand in thanks to Allah and expressed his gratitude for his welcome.

The day following my entry into Damascus the remainder of the Arab army entered along with their loads and behind them on a camel came one whom they called Havaja-el-Masra, the paymaster. This camel rider I learned was Captain Lawrence, now Colonel Lawrence of Arabia. To him the sheiks with their men presented for payment their bills properly approved by the Arab leaders.

Captain Lawrence to my knowledge did nothing to foment the Arab revolution, nor did he play any part in the Arab military tactics. When first I heard of him he was a paymaster, nothing more. And so he was to Prince Emir Abdulah, brother of King Feisal, whom I knew.

I do not write in disparagement. I write as a fighting man. Some must fight and others pay.

CHAPTER XVI

I Meet My Brothers and Join the French Legion D'Orient

On November 4, 1918, news reached Damascus that the Armenian Volunteers from America had come to an understanding with the French and the Allies in which the Turkish province of Cilicia was promised as a future homeland. Reports stated that they were marching along the Mediterranean coast in the direction of Beirut. I arranged for a leave of absence from the Arab forces and gathering a force of eight hundred native Armenian volunteers shortly left for the city of Beirut.

I seemed to come alive again within me as the Arab Headquarters paid us military honors upon our departure and the Allies sent their representatives to make it an impressive affair.

All along the route the Arabian villages greeted us and our progress seemed but a gala and interminable holiday. I began to feel again and wondered if I should see my brothers and planned a hasty journey to Aleppo for my sister.

After four days we reached Beirut and were met by a delegation of Armenian Volunteers.

I immediately inquired of an Armenian private if he knew of anyone in his legion who hailed from Everek.

"Yes, sir," he said, "my Sergeant and my Corporal, two brothers, came from Everek originally."

"What are their names?"I asked.

"Parsegh and Aram Torossian," he replied.

My heart was deeply stirred as I realized I was soon to meet my brothers, who were stationed here with the Armenian Legion from America.

I requested the private to carry the news of my arrival to my brothers, and I paced up and down the gloomy hall. A little later two young men walked up to me and said, "Is there a man here by the name of Captain Torossian? He is our brother, and we want to see him."

I looked at their faces anxiously, then went on, "Would you know him when you see him?"

"Surely we would. We were separated for many years, but we feel certain we would know him, if we were to meet him."

"All right, look around, go upstairs and if you find him, let me know," I stated.

In a short while they were back again and said they knew he was around, but could not find him.

"Look well, as he is near you," I informed them. With this statement they recognized me and we clasped each other in close embrace.

We sat and told our stories. Mine was not a happy one for them.

One thing I learned: My letter through the American Embassy had reached them and they had spread the news as fast as they could among friends and countrymen. The result had been the embarking of two thousand volunteers to join the Allies. That had

happened in the summer of 1917. They had landed at Cyprus and enlisted under the French flag. Within a year they had been fighting victoriously on the Palestine front. We talked for hours and hours.

On the following day I left with my brothers to bring my sister Baizar from Aleppo. Our only words were of our reunion.

We found her—dead and buried in the National Cemetery of Aleppo where to this day the dust of her body lies. She had died of sorrow and loneliness and the privations which she had endured.

My brothers broke down and cried but I could only stand dry eyed a spectator of sorrow I could feel but not express. In an old garden in Arabia I had looked into two eyes like fading stars and something had died within me.

* * *

I remained in Beirut for almost two months until the French Commander Romeo of the Armenian forces moved to take possession of Cilicia. Several companies were sent out along the route of repatriation to ensure the safe return of refugees to their home.

I was appointed to the city of Alexandrette while my brothers marched with the main body of the army to Adana, one of the principal cities of Cilicia.

The Turks fled in fear and panic before the Armenian Legion yet in the lonely mountain roads they waylaid and attacked the scattered Armenian caravans that came in all directions. It soon became necessary to establish military posts and escorts all through the province.

In this crisis I was dispatched with fifty men to the region around Payas where the Turks had gathered in large numbers and were committing countless robberies and assaults in cover of darkness.

The defeated Turks gave vent to their anger whenever they could find a defenseless caravan. And there were many of them. I marvelled at the fortitude of my people as they struggled to the home which had been guaranteed to them and the safety which they had been assured. They came, ragged and unkempt multitudes: heavy bearded-men, sickly weak-looking women in rags, fragile, half-starved children. Fear still lurked in their eyes and when they were offered escort from post to post they would try to kiss our hands in gratitude.

As the weeks passed attacks by scattered Turkish bands became more frequent and I began to wonder from what source they could be obtaining their arms and ammunition. I reported the matter to Headquarters and was authorized to conduct a raid on their villages. I did so and to my great astonishment I found that their stores of arms and ammunition were being supplied by the French.

I communicated my findings by dispatch to my superiors at Alexandrette. No action was taken and I began to feel rather dubious of the situation.

Shortly afterwards I was ordered by Colonel Romeo to organize a cavalry platoon of forty men and leave at once for the city of Adana.

On March 28, 1919, we arrived at our destination, having travelled partly by train.

Cilicia breathed of freedom there. The streets in

the cities and villages were crowded and every day was a festive day. The Turkish Empire seemed disintegrating. Since the signing of the Armistice the region around Adalia was occupied by the Italians, Smyrna by the Greeks and Constantinople was practically in the hands of the Allies.

The spring and summer months were to all appearances uneventful but toward fall a noticeable change took place in the attitude of our Allied friends and protectors, the French and English, and I sensed that an intrigue had long been brewing.

Steady streams of Turkish war prisoners had been released by the English and daily were passing through Cilicia by way of the Alden railway.

Suddenly the positions of Aintab, Marash, Kilis and Adana were abandoned by their British guard and turned over to the inadequate Armenian Legion without sufficient explanation. One of the English officers hinted to me that a secret treaty now existed between the French and the Turks which ultimately would result in the evacuation of Cilicia by the Allies. In less than one month practically all British troops were withdrawn.

The next move in which my people were pawns was more tragic: The French Governor of Cilicia stepped down from his official position and appointed a Turkish successor.

My people were bitter; they had received what they thought were inviolable promises. I was bitter but not surprised because I knew the treachery of diplomacy. War made beasts, vicious, often heroic beasts

of men in battle; diplomacy was the game of jackals. I preferred to fight.

As soon as I heard of the action of the French Governor I decided to keep a close watch on headquarters. One afternoon a Turkish Major was reported to have left Colonel Romeo's headquarters. I ordered him followed and he had entered a Turkish encampment on the outskirts of the city.

That night I put on civilian clothing and made my way to the Turkish camp. I entered their lines in a matter of fact manner, smiled and saluted the somewhat astonished guards with the usual friendly greeting "Es-selam-Alekum." They responded almost automatically and I introduced myself as Emin Bey, an Artillery Captain from Adrianople, producing photographs of myself in Turkish uniform to reassure them.

I was escorted to the high officials who seemed pleased with my visit but were puzzled why I dared linger in the vicinity alone when there was every chance that a revengeful Arab might decide to make short order of me. I had a glib answer to that, explaining that I was on leave of absence from the Aleppo Division and merely had stopped off on my way to Kaiseri. To strengthen my story I told them that I was masquerading as an Armenian being fearful to proceed further on my journey due to reports that a large Armenian contingent of fifteen thousand men were now approaching by way of Mersina.

Gradually they became more communicative.

"Are all your soldiers preparing to leave directly for their homes?" I inquired.

They laughed and assured me that they most cer-

tainly were not; they were about to join the army of Mustafa Kemal who was a strong man and would bind Turkey's wound and soon recapture her lost territory.

"Things have come to a pretty and a fortunate pass for us, Captain, when our Allied enemies have now become our much needed friends. Of course it is not difficult to understand the situation: they are all anxious to control Turkey but cannot agree among themselves, therefore, they provide us with arms and ammuniation. They would rather leave Turkey in the hands of the Turks than in the hands of each other for they trust eaech other less than they trust us."

"Our one great nuisance now," another officer remarked, "is the Armenians; they are pretty powerful here in Cilicia and well armed. But the French assure us that in a few months Cilicia will be delivered back into our hands."

I tactfully joined in their laugher and in the applause that greeted the remarks.

Various plans were discussed and I learned that the French had provided for their safe conduct to Adana and also had sent rations the previous evening to meet their immediate needs.

At last in the early evening I left with seeming reluctance and with their good wishes ringing in my ears.

I did not sleep well that night for as a military man I must plan a course of action.

On the following morning I hastened to the Council of the Armenian National Union and imparted to them the information I had gathered at the same time submitting a three-point plan of action:

1—To raise the flag of revolution in Cilicia.
2—To seize all French officers and escort them out of the province.
3—To arm and fortify all towns under immediate danger of attack, particularly border towns and all main entrances into our territory.

I pointed out that the Allies might then pay some heed to their promises.

My suggestions were unheeded. I was a military man, and faced the issue squarely while the Council consisted of wealthy business men, totally ignorant of political and military affairs and more interested in their personal success than in the Allied betrayal of their people. They insisted that they were protected by the decisions of the Paris conference. I tried to point out that we could not use decisions and words for bullets but I could not convince them of the impending disaster which swung like a sword over the province.

Three months or more passed. By this time the Turkish messengers openly were communicating with the French authorities.

An order from the French government appeared stating that all Armenian soldiers who wished to resign from the military service were free to do so.

More than half the Armenian volunteers from America had long since become convinced of our betrayal by the French and in disgust and disillusionment had sailed for America.

Colonel Romeo was succeeded by Colonel Phlised-Mari.

The storm gathered. Turkish immigrants began to appear on all sides. There was unrest. You could feel the undercurrents. Along the east and northeastern section of Cilicia, Turkish Kemalists began to besiege the border cities. About this time French forces were recalled from the vicinity of Marash, leaving the inhabitants easy victims to the Maranders. In less than a week afterwards the Turks entered the city and massacred over twelve thousand Armenians, and about six thousand Senagalese soldiers were frozen to death.

Turkish Kemalists began to appear in greater numbers and in the region of Hadjin began to harass the Armenian population. Only about a thousand families lived in that section and for several months they fought valiantly to defend themselves, always expecting the French aid that had been promised but never received.

Conditions grew worse. The French continued to play their triple game. Sometimes they openly assisted the Turks; then again a little help would be extended the Armenians; upon occasion their own interests became paramount and then both Turks and Armenians would be threatened and coerced and played one against the other.

Throughout these uncertain stages I and my platoon had been protecting small villages on the outskirts of Adana.

I felt impotent and futile and I suppose carelessly desperate. I tired of the game and decided to resign from the French service, an act which was exceedingly simple since I had never signed any agreement and was free to leave at will.

Meantime, the Armenian National Union was asking volunteers from the Armenians to protect Adana on February, 1920. I accepted the commandership for the fronts of the Western and Southern lines. Serving about five weeks rendered my service, but seeing that the French were playing politics and not permitting us to act as we wanted, so I thought that I would not be able to execute my plans, I resigned.

CHAPTER XVII

Behind the Turkish Guerrillas' Lines

It was now April, 1920, almost a year and a half after the Armistice—and still there were no signs of peace over Turkey. Banditry was growing worse and the followers of Mustafa Kemal began to confuse and terrorize the interior.

French soldiers were massacred as the Turks grew more confident and stronger and thus the betrayers too were betrayed. The country was overrun with rebellion.

Less than a week after I resigned from the Armenian voluntary service I was enroute to the mountainous districts followed by fifteen aggressive, determined horsemen, all sharpshooters, fine riders and able to speak Turkish fluently.

It was sheer adventure; though I had a definite plan in view in my heart I knew there was no hope. But I had to keep moving for the mysterious and inexpressible gnawing within me gave me no rest. I thought of Jemileh and my parents and Baizar and the Pasha and Muharrem as people not dead but citizens of a dream. Nothing in the world was true. I was desperate and if my end was to be desperate that was all right too. We were garbed in Turkish banded uniforms to better enable us to enter Turkish villages and spread our propaganda.

My intention was to cover as much of their territory

as possible and use every means to confuse and baffle them by spreading the most alarming stories of the power and strength of the Armenians and French. Since I could not fight them I hoped to fight them sufficiently to cause them to hesitate before attacking the larger Cilician cities which were practically defenseless and whose population consisted mostly of women and children.

My experiences, my adventures as I roved from place to place would entail a lengthy story of personal adventures which would have no historical significance and since I am inapt at narrative, would, I fear, make an already long story the more impossible. But I cannot altogether refrain from reminiscing and I set down two incidents which refuse to leave me and insist upon being told.

We had been scouting here and yon through the mountain country for several weeks, gaining the confidence of the villages and the soldiers and had learned much from the more desperate of the Kemalist forces and from marauding bands of Turkish villagers.

It seemed that at every turn of a road we came upon evidences of atrocities. We came upon bodies of French soldiers dismembered and mutilated beyond recognition. We sat by camp fires and listened to their tales that reeked of blood and barbarity. Sometimes we buried the dead and often we tried to ease those dying. This famous and courageous battalion, commanded by Major Michell, had won many contests at the front in Macedonis. In the vicinity of Bazanti (Cilicia) they were surprised and surrounded by the Turks and in the onslaught more than half of their

battalion were massacred. The remainder fought their way through the Turkish ranks and found refuge in a castle and there they remained for five weeks. We tried to rescue them but each time we were repulsed.

One night the French soldiers led by their valorous Major Michell fled through the castle gates, broke through the Turkish barricade carrying their wounded, who numbered three hundred, and headed west toward Tarsus. Day after day bands of Kurds and Turks passed us singing their songs of victory.

While I was at Bazanti my two brothers, Sergeant Parsegh and Corporal Aram, having only thirty-two soldiers in their forces were fighting. Parsegh, as the chief of the Bridge of Misis, fought valiantly three days continuously against two thousand Kemalist forces, and they saved more than a thousand Armenian refugees and reached in safety their destination Adana.

One day near the city of Tarsus we learned that two hundred or more bandits were on their way to pillage the city and murder the Christian inhabitants. My band was too small to forestall them and so I hit upon a subterfuge to enlist the aid of the surrounding Turkish villages.

One of my men named Mardig was well versed in Mohammedan rites of worship and could skilfully imitate the sayings and genuflections of the Turkish Hojas. We obtained for him a Hoja's robe and arrangements were made that he should preach a threatening and monitory sermon.

Two of my men proceeded us by a day and announced to the village chiefs the coming of the Holy

One. The district Mosque was cleaned and an especially holy rug laid on the pulpit.

Nearly a thousand Turkish villagers, illiterate and ignorant, came forth to greet us and piously kissed the hand of Mardig as he slowly walked toward the temple with the bowed head and sacred mien of a pious one.

Mardig, I think, never had such fun in his life. The people gathered about the Mosque fountain for ablution of hands, face, and feet and filed quietly into the presence of the wandering Hoja who was to fill their soul with the spirit of the Prophet. The moment was tense, almost hysterical, for us; it was amusing and dangerous. Mardig walked bravely and majestically to the pulpit and sat himself down ceremoniously on the very special rug spread out for him.

I was surprised at the firmness and clearness of his voice, surprised and relieved as he recited the opening words of the Koran, "Bis Millah-hi Rahman-ul Rahim." A look of intense agony spread over his features and as if filled with the deepest of holy emotions he rolled his eyes and frantically waved his arms. Then even more loudly he proclaimed his mission.

"Hear ye, O believers of Mohammed and my beloved brothers," he began, "and listen well to the holy wishes of our most worshipped leader. Sad and wicked are the days in which we live, and our homes, our country, and our sacred religion are being sorely endangered by the black spectre of death and destruction.

"The disreputable leaders of our government, the Union and Progress Party, have now passed into oblivion after sacrificing the lives of two million of our young manhood. War still continues while the rest of

the world is at peace. Not a home even in the most remote village is without the loss of some beloved. Yet this is not all. Our leaders by their atrocious acts against the infidel Armenian have aligned the world against us. Is not our land filled with hundreds of foreign soldiers forcing us into submission? Where are our leaders now? In parts unknown, in safety. They deserted us at our most critical period and carried with them the wealth left in our pillaged treasury. They sit in foreign countries in beauty and sunlight and ease with their concubines while we remain and suffer. Now another villain springs in our midst, another leader, one Mustafa Kemal, who has organized a new army of bloodthirsty bandits who rob our villages, rape our womanhood and press our few remaining boys and young men into their service and their depredations.

"What a terrible situation we are facing. What will be the end? They persuade you to kill Christians that you may attain paradise, while the truth is they want to feather their own nests. They offer you abominable lies. Our Mohammed is deeply angered and grieved because the hands of Moslems are soaked and stained with Christian blood. Let us rise as true believers and refuse to serve this dictator Mustafa Kemal. Let us destroy his bandit armies and forbid them to enter our villages. Only in this way may we expect Allah's blessings and save our honor, our youth and our homes."

Mardig had done a splendid job. His words had impressed many of them and they crowded about him in reverent thanks for his holy advice and counsel.

The Turkish chief of the village in which was the Mosque thanked this new Hoja most profusely and wished that our visit be prolonged. We hastily, too hastily, I at first feared, excused ourselves on the plea that we must quickly escort the good Hoja to other villages that he might warn other hamlets of Allah's wrath before it was too late.

We left promising them protection in the event that they were attacked while we were in the vicinity and secured a like promise from them.

We halted for the night at Kozolof Inn where the inn keeper confirmed the report that two hundred Kemalists were on the way to Tarsus. Later we learned that they were expected to pass this place on the morrow and we began to wonder about our own fate.

All through the night we planned how to outwit them and put them to flight, a seemingly mad adventure for sixteen men. Our decision was more daring than logical and centered about the narrow gorge of Gurlek through which the Kemalist bandits must pass on the way to Tarsus.

We were up early and waiting on the following morning. It was nearing nine o'clock when we heard the rumble of approaching horsemen and soon their ribald songs. Within a short time we were greeting them in the language of brothers.

I explained that we were strong adherents of Mustafa Kemel and were charged as a scouting party to guard and assure the safe passage of his loyal soldiers along this particular road as in the past many Kemalist had been attacked and robbed by strong bands of deserters which were active in this section. I warned

them not to dare to attempt further progress until after 11 o'clock as I wished to make further investigations to insure their safety.

The inn was inviting, my story must have rung true and they were gullible. But just as I was about to lead my men away they crowded about us brandishing their blades much too recklessly and for the moment I feared that at last we had dared too far. However, they simply expressed their valor and told us of their plans to ravish every Christian maid in Tarsus. We must hurry, they admonished us in a sheer excess of bestiality.

Once away we pressed our horses and made for positions on the rocky ledges overlooking the narrow Gorge of Gurlek. I dispatched two of my men to the village which we had visited the day before and asked for immediate help in the name of Allah. In barely forty-five minutes the Turkish village chief and his men had joined us.

Guns were placed at the entrance and exit of the rocky pass and on the sides of the jagged cliffs our men lay concealed and ready for ambush.

It was nearly noon before the Kemalists came winding down the gorge. I waited until the last man was within the range and then gave the signal. The battle was over in half an hour and the gorge a place of dead and dying men.

The news of the attack spread quickly for within two days whole companies of Kemalists were sent to guard the pass.

After the battle we took to the mountains and went into hiding for a week. Then we traveled on gaining

the confidence of the chiefs of new villages, foiling Turkish plans by subterfuge or battle. We fought and killed until we were exhausted.

I rode my horse an indifferent man, the flame for a hopeless cause burned to embers in the great void which now seemed to be my life. Suddenly I found myself without a mission, with no wild hopes to follow.

But our daring and the conviction that we were loyal Turks had spread through the hills. A village chief hearing that we were on the road again invited us to supper there. Why not? I accepted; something I should never have done had I not felt so lost in the emptiness of days. Before I had been daring, now I became foolhardy for on the way to our host's village we passed through another so closely adjacent that only a few miles separated them. My men seemed to think that we should try to please both villages, and I agreed but I insisted on going on alone. I was tired to death of my men, my horse. I craved the company of my loneliness. I took only my sidearm and a few hand grenades and walked.

The dinner with my host was excellent, I suppose, the Turkish coffee thick and pleasant and the enarguilch stimulating; my recollection of the incident to that point is simply tied in with the immense static of those days.

Suddenly the village dogs began to bark and it seemed but one instant before there was loud insistent howling at the door. In a moment life took on new meaning. The village chief turned pale and hesitated to answer. I became a captain or a guerilla chief again.

My host I ordered to remain above while I went downstairs to investigate.

I opened the door and found two armed Kemalists there. This was something! Something to live for! I slammed the door, boltled it, drew my revolver and dashed upstairs again. By the time I reached the room where we had dined they had begun firing at the windows. I crept along the floor and threw a hand grenade. I saw shadows scatter in the darkness as they ran for the shelter of trees and rocks.

The chief and his wife and children became panic-stricken and I heard lamentations which vied with the night of the boars at Fettah Gorge. The chief in his panic was helpless and his wife's screams were mercilessly piercing, especially when I threw over me one of her veils, one of those long Mohammedan veils that reach to the feet, and took her little one by the hand and started for the rear door. By this time I feared trickery so I assured her that if anyone made a slight outcry while I was leaving the child would be killed. As to whether or not I would have carried out my threat I do not know. In the fear of treachery and the instinct to survive men do many murderous things.

The ruse was successful, why or how I shall never tell you. I brushed the Kemalist chief as I passed and he roughly ordered that we should quickly get out of the range of fire. I know that it must seem fabulous yet it remains so vivid in my mind that I seem to see and feel the daring of that night as I walked down a lane that faced the rear of the village houses with a little girl's hand tightly clasped in mine.

We had gone perhaps a half mile before I dodged

behind a house, removed the veil, thrust it into the child's hands and roughly ordered her to go into the nearest house and not dare leave as I was returning with a great army of bloodthirsty men. A noble pastime scaring little children.

I ran to the next village and when I reached there found my men already restive by their horses and alarmed at the rifle fire which came to them faintly. Breathless I shouted the usual story and entreated the villagers in the name of Allah to have every man who had arms to follow us as their neighbors were being attacked by bandits. We took to horse and rode pell mell. The Kemalists had barely a chance as we surrounded them. They pleaded in the name of Allah that they were Mohammedans and regular soldiers but with the aid of the villagers we shot them down, quite coldly. And then we rounded up their horses and leading them left as if to follow the few retreating remnants while we ordered the villagers to remain. In fact we took to the hills again and to this day I do not know whether that village chief had meant to betray me.

War you see is an heroic business. Some men die and others live to write about it.

At last the one remaining flame within me burned out and I tired of revenge. Our quest was obviously hopeless and we were overwhelmed by history. Our efforts were impossibly futile. I decided at last to put aside my sword and gun. Cilicia was not an Armenian homeland but a seething cauldron in which intrigues were brewed in the blood of my people.

I told my band of my decision and asked them if

they first would follow me to the little town of Everek.

Three days travel brought us into the long familiar valley guarded by the snow-capped mountains of Erjias. I went on without sorrow to satisfy an insatiable longing which I did not try to understand. I was a spectator of my own life.

We journeyed slowly westward and came into the shadow of the trees at the edge of the town as the sun had almost disappeared behind the mountains.

I passed my father's farmland and which once had been fragrant with fruit trees and neat with planted fields. Now all that remained were barren fields and crazy rows of burned and shattered trunks and lifeless branches distorted forlornly against the twilight sky.

I had dismounted and was walking about when an old man approached me. His face seemed familiar and he seemed to recognize me. At last I remembered him as the miller of our town. He nervously advised against going further into the village which was now occupied by Turks and Kurds while a large force of Kemalists was encamped on the northern side of the city.

I lingered on I don't know why for I was no sentimentalist. I was a man whose emotions had died.

In the darkness we left and turned toward the forests at the foot of the mountains where we spent the night.

Gradually, cautiously we made our way back to Adana. Each day of our journey confirmed our thoughts that the Armenian cause in Cilicia was hopelessly lost. When we reached Adana we found the

Armenian inhabitants fleeing daily, a saddened, fearful, disillusioned people.

In an interview with the French authorities they made it clearly evident that my private adventure displeased and worried them and they urgently advised that I sail for America.

I looked up my brother and we all agreed that the cause was lost.

We sailed from Adana in the night as a cloudless sky hung over the waters and a lovely star came out.